

# IDEAL TRIFLES.

PUBLISHED BY A LADY.

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*Omne tulit punctum, qui miscuit utile dulci  
Lectorem delectando, pariterque monendo.*—HORACE.

There are, indeed, but very few who know how to be idle and innocent, or have a Relish of any Pleasures that are not criminal.—A Man should endeavour therefore to make the Sphere of innocent Pleasures as wide as possible, that he may retire into them with Safety, and find in them such a Satisfaction as a wise Man would not blush to take.—ADDISON.

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L O N D O N :

Printed for JOHN BOOSEY, Bookfeller, at No. 39,  
KING-STREET, CHEAPSIDE. 1774.

IDEAS TRIFLES

PUBLISHED BY A LADY



LONDON:  
Printed by JOHN JOSEPH, Bookbinder, at No. 11,  
St. Paul's Churchyard, Strand. 1774.



## ADVERTISEMENT.

Whatever Pleasure the Perusal of the following Sheets may afford the Reader, he owes it to a Circumstance the Recollection of which will always be painful to the Editor. By the Death of a worthy and learned Friend, a Man who did Honour not only to his Profession but to human Nature, and whose Memory will be ever dear to me; these Letters, and other Papers, came into my Hands; he having left me by his Will all his Letters, excepting those of Business, and all his literary Compositions. Among the Let-

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ters were several Parcels, on the Covers of which were pasted numbered Labels with this Inscription, "IDEAL TRIFLES." On opening them, I found the Letters which they contained disposed according to their Date, which, for the greater Ease of finding and reducing them again to Order, should they on any Occasion be thrown into Confusion, was, together with a Number determining the Order which each held in the Series, marked on their Backs. Inclosed in the first Parcel I found the following Note:

The Letters contained in this Collection, of which there are now several Parcels, each comprehending the Letters of

" a

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“ a Year, were written by a Set of Friends  
“ who formed themselves into a Society,  
“ which they called *The Society of Idealists*;  
“ for this Reason, that they all agreed in be-  
“ lieving, that they who would seriously  
“ and strenuously set about obtaining the  
“ greatest Degree possible of Happiness in  
“ this World, must look for it, not in Ex-  
“ ternals, but within themselves; not in  
“ the Pleasures of Sense, but in those of  
“ the Mind. They allowed, indeed, that  
“ the Pleasures of Sense had their Value;  
“ but that it was only a secondary one:  
“ That, added to those of the Mind, they,  
“ if possible, heightened their Relish; but  
“ that the latter being absent, the former  
“ sunk into nothing, or, into worse than  
“ nothing.

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“ nothing. I call these Letters IDEAL  
“ TRIFLES, because they are some of  
“ the least important ones which passed be-  
“ tween the *Idealists*; those of the greatest  
“ Value having been picked out, and  
“ lodged in the Repository of the Senti-  
“ ments and Principles of this Society.  
“ For this Reason, in many Places, Let-  
“ ters are wanting to fill up the Series:  
“ As also for another Reason, these Letters,  
“ being but lightly esteemed in Comparison  
“ with those which were picked out, lay  
“ for a long Time tossed about among  
“ loose Papers, before they were in this  
“ Manner collected together; by which  
“ Means many of them were lost. It was  
“ the Missing of some of them, which I  
“ wanted



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“ wanted one Day to peruse for my Amuse-  
“ ment, which induced me so carefully to  
“ collect and arrange the Remainder.”

Thus far the Note.—I have only to add,  
that the present Publication is taken from  
the three first Parcels; that the Letters  
stand here in the same Order with that in  
which I there found them; and that the  
Editor has no where taken the Liberty of  
altering the Originals, except in disguising  
the Names of Persons and Places; and in  
correcting some few accidental grammatical  
Errors, or other trifling Oversights,  
which obviously required Correction. They  
are intended only as a Specimen. If I  
shall have Reason to think that they have  
been

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been an agreeable Present to the virtuous and well-disposed Part of my own Sex, for whom I intend them as at least an innocent Amusement, I may, perhaps, favour them, should this not be thought altogether unworthy the public Notice, with further Entertainment from the same pleasing Collection: At least I shall think my present Trouble as an Editor well bestowed, and myself sufficiently rewarded.

IDEAL

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# IDEAL TRIFLES.

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## LETTER I.

PHILANDER to SOPHIA.

**C**AN a Lady of your Education and liberal Spirit be offended at a Man who from an Admiration of your mental Features desires and begs a farther Acquaintance and Friendship with you. Will you call it Presumption? No; if I may judge of Sophia from the little I know of her, I think she looks upon all the Sons and Daughters of Reason as her Brothers

B

and

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and Sisters; and will behave to them with that amiable Benignity and Freedom which are ever the Attendants of an enlarged Understanding, and unconfined Notions. Upon the Credit of this, Madam, I hope I may presume to reckon myself in the Number of your Friends.

The last Time I had the Pleasure of being in your Company, part of the Conversation turning upon the eternal Law of Truth, your Friend whispered to me that you would be glad to hear me expatiate on that Subject. I should immediately, with Pleasure, have obeyed the Request, had not the agreeable Foreigner at that Instant started another Subject.

What



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What slight Hints I then gave concerning it I do not now exactly remember. At present, in some Measure to make Amends for your Disappointment at that Time, I shall endeavour to give you a few Outlines of my Sentiments on that Point.

The Law of Truth and right Reason is much talked of by Moral Writers; but often, in my Opinion, without any accurate Meaning; perhaps without any Meaning at all. Indeed the Matter is so very abstracted, that it is no Wonder we should be apt to suffer Words to supply the Place of Ideas. This hath given to many a Handle for doubting whether there be any such Thing as absolute Truth and right Reason; and whether all our Morality be

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any Thing better than accidental, and our so much boasted Reasoning at all more certain than the irregular Flights of Fancy. But they seem to err in not distinguishing between the Law of Reason, and the limited Exercise of the reasoning Faculty in Man. The reasoning Faculty, it is true, is always exercised according to the Law of Reason; and yet so bounded are its Views, so circumscribed is its Sphere of Action, in this our humble and imperfect State, that we may be, and too frequently are, led by it into Error; not because we do not properly exercise that Faculty, or because it is not certain in its Operations; but because when our Knowledge of Facts and Circumstances is imperfect, it as certainly leads us into wrong Conclusions; as  
when

when it is perfect and sufficient for the Purpose, it leads to right, that is to Truth. Truth then is ‘ the Existence of Beings, ‘ and their Relations to each other, with ‘ the Propriety of Actions respecting those ‘ Relations.’ But what is the Law of Truth; that Law which is eternal, and must have existed, though no *created* Being had ever existed? Is it not a Power *necessarily* inherent in the Nature of Mind itself, without which there can be no such Thing as Mind? Is it not the Power of discerning and judging of the Relations of Things, and of seeing the Fitness or Propriety of the Actions of Moral Agents under certain Circumstances, and with Respect to certain Relations? The Moral Fitness of Things then is not the eternal Law of

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Moral Truth, but it is Moral Truth itself. But the Law of Truth is the very Nature of Mind, necessarily discerning the Relations of Things, and the Moral Propriety of Actions, under any given and determined Circumstances. This Law therefore must ever have existed in the Nature of every individual spiritual Being independent of the Existence of any other Being or Beings which by their Relations might occasion Moral Fitness or Propriety. And, supposing no other Being to exist, it must have existed from all Eternity in the Divine Mind itself, invariably the same. Will not this be sufficient to account for an eternal and unchangeable Foundation of Morality to all immaterial or reasonable Beings, under all possible Relations and Circum-



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Circumstances, without having Recourse to innate Ideas? or supposing that Moral Rectitude is as uncertain and variable as the Will of an arbitrary Agent uninfluenced by any rational and consistent Motive; or, as Seed expresses it, that the moral Virtues are like so many Cyphers, and derive their Value from the Deity's being at the Head of them? This Foundation of moral Duty, existing in the Nature of Mind itself, and therefore universally obligatory to all spiritual rational Natures, does it not open to the Mind a consistent, grand and sublime Conception of that immense City or Community of intellectual Beings which inhabit the Universe; to see them all in their different Spheres, and different Degrees of

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Eminence, acting by the same universal Rule, only varied according to their different Circumstances, and Relations to God and their Fellow-creatures ; so that each would be led to act in the same Manner under exactly the same Circumstances.

Thus, Madam, have I given you a slight and imperfect Sketch of my Sentiments on this very important and abstruse Question: And however crude you may think my Notions, my Motive for troubling you with them will, I doubt not, sufficiently plead in my Excuse. But if they should afford you the least Satisfaction, I shall think myself happy in having made you acquainted with them ; as the smallest Degree

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gree of Approbation from a Lady of your  
Learning and Genius cannot fail of being  
highly grateful to

Yours most respectfully,

PHILANDER,

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LETTER II.

SOPHIA TO PHILANDER.

NIGHT, Leisure, and Tranquillity, are ever most welcome Guests with me; and in the Midst of such good Company have I seated myself, with my Friend Philander's Epistle before me, in Order to answer it: As the Billet I sent him was for no other Purpose than to let him see my Acceptance of his agreeable Offer.

As I am fondly ambitious of conversing with the Learned, or with those at least who are Lovers of them who are so, I could wish, if Providence had so pleased, that all such had the Happiness to be born  
in



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in the same Country, or, rather, in the same Place; and I to make one in the charming Number! I would willingly leave all the Earth besides to the dull-plodding Sons of Care, to gay Impertinents, and those empty Triflers who seem to be placed in the World only to fill up the Vacuum. I am afraid, however, that the last Appellation but too well suits myself. Yet having a Desire to be otherwise, I imagine, may pass for some small Merit on my Side: And in Order to console myself for my Deficiency in this mortal State, I must have Recourse to that only Blessing which Mankind had left them, when Pandora's fatal Box let out all the numberless Evils which infest these sublunary Regions,—

“Hope springs eternal in the human Breast:”

B 6

And

And think that,

“ When the freed Spirits mount on Wings of Fire,

“ To their first Elements they all retire ;”—

“ Or else to some congenial Planet fly,”—

Where kindred Minds shall meet, and find  
Employments suited to, and worthy of their  
respective Dispositions.

That Part of your Letter concerning  
the eternal Law of Truth and right Reason pleased me very much. Shall I tell  
you the genuine Sources from whence my  
Pleasure sprung ? I will : There is a Virtue  
in being honest. It arose, first, from the  
Novelty as well as Ingenuity of your Sentiments on so very important a Subject as  
that of the Foundation of moral Rectitude :  
And, secondly, my Vanity was flattered  
into

into some little Belief of my own Capacity and Judgment: For as I cannot imagine that you entered upon this Subject merely with a View to display your profound Knowledge and Penetration, I must necessarily look upon it as a plain Declaration that you thought me capable of relishing, at least, if not of judging of these Matters.

O, my Friend, I have often thought that if our Sex could but once extricate themselves from the Trammels in which Custom and female Education have enthralled them, we might then, like you, with equal Pleasure and Success, engage in the Search of Truth and right Reason; and leave the low Pursuits of Envy and Defamation to those whose Dispositions lead

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lead them to be pleased with such pernicious Amusements. Don't think now from these Hints, that I would wish with all my Sex to become recluse Philosophers. No; I think nothing more absurd and disgusting than female Pedantry: But I am much mistaken if such Pursuits, engaged in with Moderation, so as to enlarge our Minds, and give them a Relish for rational Enjoyments, would not inspire us with more Charity for each other, render us more cautious and exact in the Discharge of our domestic Duties, and much more studious, in every Respect, of moral Beauty and Decorum.

You may see, Sir, by the Freedom with which I write to you, that I have already  
ranked



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ranked myself in the Number of those who are favoured with your Friendship; which, if you shall continue to think me worthy of it, will be ever esteemed an Honour by

SOPHIA.

N. B. Several Letters, after this, are wanting between Sophia and Philander.

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LETTER III.

SOPHIA TO PHILANDER.

**W**HAT shall I say to my esteemed Philander in Excuse of my long-seeming Neglect? Is Diffidence a Fault, or is it not? By his Judgment I am content to be found culpable or stand acquitted; since I am almost confident that my Sentence will be just when he is the Judge. I will therefore, without any farther Preface, ingenuously acknowledge my Offence, if it is one, and tell him that the more I saw of his Writings the more insipid my own appeared to me; insomuch that having a very fertile Brain in self-tormenting Notions, I imagined it almost next

to impossible for one of so refined a Taste to relish what appeared so imperfect even to me. This Thought soon produced a Second equally or rather more disagreeable than its Parent. Perhaps his first Inducement to desire a Correspondence with me, said I to myself, was rather Curiosity, from his observing some striking Oddities in my Conversation, than from any Manner of Liking he had for it: And so possibly afterwards he might desire the Continuation of it more out of Diversion than Approbation. This Consideration was too prevalent, and struck me too forcibly not to be listened to. Then immediately I resolved rather to run the Hazard of depriving myself entirely of the Pleasure which my much-valued Friend's Letters gave me, than

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than bear the mortifying Thought of being perhaps an Object of Ridicule and Disesteem, where I earnestly wished the contrary, The only Part I had to take, in Order to make some little Trial of your Sincerity, was to be silent, I imagined; and calmed my Mind with the soothing Thought that if you liked my Prattle you would again ask for it; and you should see that at least I was not obtrusive, whatever else might be my Faults. But a Letter which I happily received last Week has greatly helped to cure my Suspicions: And when I reflect on the humane and generous Disposition which is always the Concomitant of good Sense and an enlarged Understanding, I begin to consider my Doubts of your Friendship as so many Injuries,



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juries, and the highest I could possibly offer you. I might indeed keep them from your Knowledge, but I am determined to let you see the Foibles of your Friend; not only as a Punishment on myself for having entertained them, but also as a Proof of my Amity in discovering the hidden Defects of my Mind, and trusting to your Candour and Clemency for the Extenuation and Forgiveness of them.

I think you chide me in one of your Letters for having complimented you on those poetical Pieces you sent me; as if you thought the slender Commendations I bestowed on them were insincere, and rather extorted by the Force of Complaisance than flowing genuine from the Heart.

Don't

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Don't you imagine that you have put it greatly in my Power to recriminate, more especially in your two last Epistles? I wish Nature had made me a Poetess, that I might answer you in your own Way. Suppose I should try for once? What do you say to it?—Yes!—Well, now I can't refuse.—Let me see—O—thus I begin,

Against the Force of Praise like thine what Art,—

—In good Faith, Mr. Pegafus, that will never do. You seem to limp already.—I had best alight, I believe, and prosecute my Journey on Foot.—Yet, a propos.—I can go a shorter Way to Work. The first Line may still stand as the Text, and thus it follows,

A good

A good Poet always leaves  
Room for the Imagina-  
tion to work.

— Heart  
— Aid  
— persuade  
— Queen  
— Scene  
— Cries  
— Eyes  
— wife  
— do  
— to  
— you.

O had I but a Genius equal to my De-  
sires, in me you should find a Rivaleſs  
dangerous as the famed Poeteſs of old,  
who five Times nobly bore away the Bays  
from Pindar's lofty Brows, and with them  
dignified her own :

Inſpir'd I'd ſing with true poetic Rage,  
And be th' admir'd Corinna of the Age.

Methinks

Methinks I cannot help looking upon your present State as a Kind of Exile: Notwithstanding I have been informed that Edinburgh is a very gay Place, and that the Scotch Gentlemen and Ladies are remarkable for Politeness, Beauty, and genteel Easiness of Behaviour; having most of them the Advantage of finishing their Education in France; yet, after all, my Ideas of Scotland are but gloomy; nor have I any Desire of brightening them, unless it be by one of Philander's poetical Descriptions; if the Subject be worthy of his Pen.

You bid me turn Critic; yet would confine my Criticisms merely to the Blemishes of your Compositions. Thus you  
 refuse



refuse me the most pleasing Half of so arduous a Talk; since, in Order to act agreeably to that Character, a Person should point out and display all the Beauties, as well as Faults of a Writer. And since Criticism, likewise, is from Pagan become Christian, she is obliged, according to her Profession, to make all possible Allowances for human Weakness, and rather offend on the charitable than severe Side: And where but few Defects appear amidst a Croud of Beauties, it rather betrays a Littleness of Mind, than judicious Penetration, to expose and censure those trifling Errors which are better overlooked.

SOPHIA.

LETTER

## LETTER IV.

PHILANDER TO SOPHIA.

**A**S an Eagle seated on the Summit of some lofty Eminence, viewing an extensive Country every where abounding with Prey, is attracted by contending Allurement from every Quarter, and at a Loss to determine what Part he should first visit; such is the Situation of my Mind when I sit down with any of my Sophia's Letters before me, in Order to answer them; the many pleasing Prospects which her Writings, as it were by a Kind of Magic, always spread around me, hold me often long suspended in my Choice, and  
unable

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unable to determine which I should first visit, or where dwell the longest.

But first I could almost persuade myself severely to chide you for forming so unfavourable and unjust a Judgment both of me and of yourself, and then allowing such unreasonable Fancies so to influence your Conduct as to give Pain to your Friend, when it was in your Power to have given him the greatest Pleasure. But you tell me you have corrected your Prejudices, and repented of your past Folly; and therefore I shall say no more.

You say you look upon my present State as a Kind of Exile. I can assure you, Madam, I could be for ever happy

C

in

in such an Exile, could I have the Company of some dear Friends whom I have left behind. Situated in an University, amidst a Number of young People of extensive Education, and enlarged Minds, many of whom are in immediate Pursuit of the same Studies with myself; having in the very same Family a Person whose Similarity of Genius, and growing Friendship, render him of all the Students the most agreeable to me; and having an amiable Set of Acquaintance always at Hand with whom to relax from the Severity of Study; in a City remarkable for Hospitality and Politeness to Strangers; you must judge me, from the Knowledge you have of my Temper, as happy as I could wish: Especially



cially when I remind you of Eudocia and Hypatia, who yet appear, in my Eyes, with undiminished Lustre. Let me also add, that the Scotch Ladies and Gentlemen here are in general remarkably fond of Music, and that many of them perform exceedingly well.

You wish to have your Ideas of Scotland brightened by my Description of its Beauties. The Country in general I am but little acquainted with: My Knowledge is chiefly confined to the Metropolis. Of its Inabitants I have already given you my Opinion. The Country around it is very far from being deficient in Beauty. I shall confine myself to those delightful and romantic

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Walks, with which this City is surrounded. The Account of these, together with what I have just been telling you, will surely give you a more agreeable Idea of my Situation than you seem hitherto to have entertained. These Walks afford Refreshment and Amusement to all the different Classes of the People. Hither the Poet and the Philosopher, the Lawyer, the Physician, and the Divine, daily resort. Here you may meet with the fine gay Gentleman, and the plain plodding Cit; with the Beau and the Belle; with honest Roger and rosy Kate. But it is a poetical Description which you require. As the Subject is so inviting, I shall with Pleasure satisfy your Wishes, as far as it is  
in

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in the Power of my humble Muse to  
satisfy them.

ON THE

WALKS ABOUT EDINBURGH.

**H**APPY the Man, who from the busy Town,  
And all its Noise, and all its Smoke escap'd,  
And noisome Exhalations, round thy Fields,  
EDINA, lofty Seat of all the Nine,  
Seat of fair Science, and the healing Art,  
Enjoys the Pleasures of the Evening Walk :—  
—Whether he slowly climbs the steep Ascent  
Of Arthur's cloud-capp'd Seat, and thence surveys  
The wide-expanded Firth, and hears the Roar  
Of distant Ocean ; and amidst the Deep  
Beholds, of various Forms, the Islands rise ;  
And, all along the winding Coast, the Towns,  
And Villages, and Hills, and Woods, and Fields :  
Or walks delighted through the shady Paths  
Which grace the verdant Meadow, and admires  
Nature's most perfect Work in female Beauty.  
But still thrice happier ! if some friendly Fair,  
Companion of his Walks, beguiles the Time

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With pleasing Converse, whence the Mind partakes  
 Exalted Pleasure ; while, to every Sense  
 The magic Joy extending, every Object  
 Affords increas'd Delight. Blithe from the Elm,  
 Or white-bloom'd Hawthorn, the melodious Black-  
 bird

Pours through his swelling Throat the tuneful Notes  
 With double Melody : The sprightly Linnet  
 Warbles his wild Notes with unusual Sweetness :  
 All Nature looks more gay : The blooming Hedges  
 More lovely bloom ; and o'er the verdant Turf  
 The blushing Flowers lift their Heads, bedeck'd  
 With brighter-glowing Tints ; and to the Smell  
 Breathe odorous Sweets of more than common  
 Fragrance :

Or wanders to the lonely Hermitage,  
 Deep hid, nor rising to the distant View :  
 Where sunk beneath a double Ridge of Hills,  
 With Rocks, and Trees, and Flowers, and Her-  
 bage crown'd,

A secret Valley hides its deep Recess ;  
 So deep, as to escape the strict Research  
 Of lawless Highlanders, when all around  
 The ravag'd Country felt their plundering Hand.  
 Here Silence reigns, and Solitude abides ;

Nor



## IDEAL TRIFLES. 32

Nor Voice nor Sound molest th' untroubled Air;  
 Save that the chanting Songsters of the Grove,  
 And bleating Flocks, and distant-lowing Herds,  
 In Concert joining, oft delight the Mind,  
 And render even Solitude more pleasing:  
 Save that the Brook which winds along the Vale  
 Aids the full Concert as it rolls along;  
 Whose Waters, eddying, round the Pebbles play,  
 In murmuring Sport, which line its sandy Bed;  
 Or fall a white Cascade, whose silver Stream  
 Rouses to Foam the Rivulet beneath:  
 While the steep Hills which rear their Heads around,  
 Waving the leafy Honours of the Grove,  
 From Rock to Rock reverberate the Sound,  
 In pleasing Undulations tofs'd, which sooth  
 To Peace the Mind with restless Cares oppress'd;  
 Diffuse a placid Calmness through the Soul;  
 And fix the steady Thought of Meditation.  
 So, when th' unbodied Spirit, freed from Earth,  
 Shall quit these grosser Regions for the Skies,  
 Mounting, ethereal, to its kindred Natures,  
 So shall the rapid Spheres, as on they move,  
 Their destin'd Journeys through the wide Expanse  
 Absolving, as in Harmony they roll,  
 With heavenly Sounds, to mortal Ears unknown,

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Salute the happy Stranger ; raise, refine,  
And with divine Serenity inspire  
The tranquil Soul, and harmonize her Powers  
To God-like Contemplations.

And let not here the grateful Muse forget  
The Scenes of rural Wildness which adorn  
The Banks, O Leith, of thy meand'ring Stream ;  
Where oft, when Nature bloom'd, well pleas'd she  
    rov'd,  
Studious of Nature's Beauties, and collected  
The choicest Flowers to deck her Votery's Brow.  
What though its easy Way it glides not on  
In State majestic ; though no pompous Barge,  
No painted Vessel down its Channel rides ;  
Though no stupendous Bridge, the labour'd Work  
Of dedal Art, unites its distant Banks ;  
What though its narrow Stream, in humble Guise,  
Above the Pebbles o'er its Bottom strew'd  
Scarce lifts its Head ; nor with the crystal Spring  
Its turbid Waters vie : Yet Use it boasts  
And artless Beauty. *Here* EDINA sees  
Her sturdy Sons, whom Industry invites  
To honest Labour, Source of Health and Peace,  
With useful Toil the stubborn Hide pursue.

## IDEAL TRIFLES. 33

*Here*, with huge Heaps of Ceres' golden Produce  
In ample Buildings stored, her Grain'ries stand,  
And laugh at Famine. *Here* the rapid Stream  
With Force collected whirls th' unwieldy Bulk  
Of many a massy Wheel, whose Strength resistless  
To subt'lest Powder grinds the yellow Grain:  
Whence Juice nutritious fills the swelling Veins,  
And chearful Life, and vigorous Health abound  
To thousands of her Children.

*Here* also Nature, gay in rustic Beauty,  
And awful in wild Majesty, invites  
The sweetly-devious Walk, when sober Eye  
O'er all the Sky her dusky Curtain draws;  
And silent Meditation musing strays,  
Admires Creation and adores its Maker.

At *early dawn* here happy could I wander  
In pensive Thought; with reverent Awe behold  
The uncouth Grandeur of some craggy Rock:  
Or, leaning o'er the Margin of the Brook,  
Gaze on the running Stream; while from each Bush  
The tuneful Warblers of the Grove pour forth  
With grateful Voice, their Morning Song of Praise.

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To their Creator : And each painted Flower  
 Its fragrant Effence breathes to him who gave,  
 With liberal Hand, its pleasing Scent and Beauty.  
 Lull'd by the gently-soothing Charms of Sense,  
 And every Passion still, I too would join,  
 Nor grateful less than they, the general Choir,  
 And think, and hymn *his* Praise, whose Bounty  
 gave

A Mind to think, and tuneful Tongue to sing.  
 Sometimes through all its serpentine Meanders  
 Delighted I'd pursue the flowing Stream ;  
 With eager Eye the varying Prospects catch,  
 And each new Scene with new Delight enjoy.

Or if, O sacred Friendship, thou should'st deign  
 Attend my Steps, who warm'st the kindling Soul  
 To Joy, unfelt, but by the social Few  
 Whose Hearts are apt to feel : If thou should'st bless  
 My Ramblings with Palemon's warming Soul,  
 And ever-grateful Tongue ; then would we glow  
 With Warmth of Heart ; while thou should'st smiling stand,  
 Reach forth thy Hand to Knowledge's fair Tree,  
 And pluck delicious Fruit ; which we would taste,  
 Would



# IDEAL TRIFLES. 35

Would freely taste, nor sickening Surfeit dread.  
Nor less the Pleasure, if some virtuous Fair,  
To Wisdom not unknown, to Fancy dear,  
Should charm our ravish'd Souls in the bright  
Shape

Of Reason, first-born Child of wisest Heaven,  
Adorn'd by Fancy in her gayest Trim :  
For Reason then most lovely seems, when cloath'd  
I' th' winning Softness of a female Form,  
She captivates the willing Soul. 'Tis thus,  
They say, she oft assumes Eudocia's Air  
And artless Grace, and fires Mankind with Love.  
'Twas here, 'twas thus, the sweet Impostor met me,  
And said she was Hypatia : I believed :  
So well did she dissemble : But admir'd  
Her force-ful Eloquence ; and wonder'd whence  
She gain'd such Wisdom : While enchanting Truth  
Flow'd from her Tongue, oft Thought her more  
than mortal.

And such she surely must have been ! Come then,  
Daughter of Heaven ! visit oft these Banks ;  
Oft deign with me in flowery Fields to stray,  
In mortal Form, and teach thy heavenly Lore.  
Whether Eudocia's gentle Soul sublime,

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And softer Features please thee: Or the Mind  
 Of moral Turn, and tender-melting Heart  
 Of generous Hypatia, whose Soul  
 Sits guileless in her animated Eye.  
 Or in what other Shape beseems thee best  
 Attend my Walks: Vouchsafe a mortal Wight  
 Thy frequent Visits; nor thy Wisdom grudge.  
 By thee instructed, may he learn whate'er  
 The Mind enlarges, and with Science stores;  
 Improves the Judgment, rectifies the Will,  
 And with the Love of moral Truth inspires:  
 Learn all the Arts which Happiness bestow  
 On social Life, and humanize the Heart.  
 Thus shall his rural Walks be richly bless'd;  
 Nor once Remorse with mispent Hours reproach.

Thus far, with what Assistance I  
 could obtain from my Muse. And how-  
 ever little you may think me in her  
 good Graces, I hope that will be no In-  
 ducement to you to withdraw from me  
 your

## IDEAL TRIFLES. 37

your Esteem: As I shall ever think it  
an Happiness and an Honour to have  
the Privilege of subscribing myself

Your most sincere

And respectful Friend

PHILANDER.

LETTER

## LETTER V.

EUDOCIA TO PALEMON.

S I R,

**T**HE last Time I enjoyed the Pleasure of your Company, that Part of your Discourse which related to that beautiful, and, I may add, *now* glorious young Lady, has made such an Impression upon my Mind as will not soon be effaced.

You told me that great Part of her Conversation was upon Death; on which serious and awful Subject she expatiated in such a *sublime* and *affecting* Manner,

as



## IDEAL TRIFLES. 39

as discovered not only that she could talk well upon it, but that she felt its Importance in her Heart. This led me to consider who were the greatest Heroes in meeting the gastly Tyrant: Surely they who have trodden in the true Paths of Virtue!—For

———— ‘The wintry Blast of Death  
• Kills not the Buds of Virtue; no, they spread,  
• Beneath the heavenly Beams of brighter Suns,  
• Through endless Ages, into higher Powers.’

THOMSON.

To such a Mind as Palemon's, which would not leave her in the Grave, and forget her there, what happy Scenes would open from such a Prospect! He would follow her in Idea through the ethereal Regions, and anticipate the

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Joys of Immortality. I must confess, however, that these are Raptures which we cannot at all Times indulge; for even all we gain by such Contemplations cannot make us wholly forget the Loss.

We need not appeal to the soft and elegant Mind for a Confirmation how severe, how poignant a Distress of this Kind is; when they whose Hearts are callous to the softer Feelings of Humanity, are sensible of great Uneasiness when suddenly deprived of an Acquaintance or an Intimate. But to lose the Partner of our Soul! To be for ever separated from the Object of our Love! A noble and virtuous Passion, ripening  
into

## IDEAL TRIFLES. 41

into exalted Friendship, to be at once blasted ! To be suddenly torn from what we hold dearest on Earth ; and to be obliged to part with the charming Object for ever, is too much for human Nature to bear without repining. Tho' convinced that it is the Lot of every Individual once to die ; yet the Soul starts with Horror when that Stroke falls upon a dearest Friend.

In those Moments, when the Soul, contemplating the Glories of the heavenly World, loses every earthly and selfish Consideration, we think we could bear a Separation from all below without Emotion or Regret : But, alas ! the Heart of Man is not known to himself :

While

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While it glows with the Fervors of Devotion, every meaner Pursuit than the Enjoyment of Almighty God appears contemptible and low; but that animating Spirit of divine Love no sooner withdraws, than our Fondness and Attachment to this Life recur; we are deeply affected with the Occurrences of Time, and again descend to Mortality.

May all the Happiness which this World can afford attend you: And when you can no longer Taste of its unsatisfying Pleasures, may you be translated to true Happiness and full Perfection, where you shall meet with all those who were once dear to you on Earth, and Death shall Part no more.

EUDOCIA.

LETTER



## LETTER VI.

## HYPATIA TO EUDOCIA.

**I** SIT down to write to you, my dear Eudocia, to try if conversing with so happy a Being as you always are, can communicate Happiness to my discontented Mind. Perhaps you will ask me why I am discontented and unhappy. O, my dear, I have answered you that Question a hundred Times. But I will again condescend to tell you. It is because I am obliged to lead my Life with a Father whose every Thought, Word, and Action is widely foreign from mine; and whose greatest Pleasure is in keeping fast locked those Hoards of Gold, for

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for the Want of which perhaps many a noble and enlarged Mind is scorned by the Wicked and Base: And to be obliged to a continual slavish Submission to the Caprice and Tyranny of an insolent overbearing Brother; and, worst of all, to be tormented with the officious Impertinence of a groveling low-minded Man, who has no Love for either my Mind or Person; but longs to call me Wife, that he may be possessed of the Fortune which he thinks I shall bring my Husband: And, to add more to my Afflictions, my Father is become his Advocate: My Brother, for his own Ends, has long been such you know: But I will bear it no longer: I will fly from them, if I am to be thus tormented.

mented. I tell them I hate Marriage. I bid them look round the World, and where they see one happy in that State will they not see a thousand otherwise? Indeed, my dear, I am serious. Hymen has no Joys for me: And I am sure he will never light his Torch on my Account; for I have Fountains of Tears which would soon extinguish it; And the gloomy Situation of my Mind is such as his Rays can never enlighten. But I trust, my dear, that I have placed my Affections upon far greater and more important Objects than those of Sense: For, as the Poet says,

“What is there here to fill our vast Desires!”

And,

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And, according to Dr. YOUNG,

——— ‘ Man, ill at Ease,  
‘ In this, *not his own Place*, this foreign Field,  
‘ Where Nature fodders him with other Food  
‘ Than was ordain’d his Cravings to suffice,  
‘ Poor in Abundance, famish’d at a Feast,  
‘ Sighs on for something more, when most enjoy’d.’

And

——— ‘ tho’, perhaps, debauch’d  
‘ By *Sense*, his *Reason*, sleeps, nor dreams the Cause.  
‘ The Cause how obvious, when his Reason wakes!  
‘ His Grief is but his Grandeur in Disguise;  
‘ And Discontent is Immortality.’

I hope, my dear, you will write soon  
to sympathize with your ever-affectionate,  
though afflicted Friend,

HYPATIA.

LETTER



## LETTER VII.

EUDOCIA to HYPATIA.

**I** HAVE this Moment received yours:  
And love you too much not to write  
to you immediately ; but not to sympathize  
with you ! No ; that would be cruel  
indeed. Would you call it kind if I  
should join with you to flatter a perverse  
Imagination ; which is striving to deceive  
your Judgment, and lead you into Un-  
happiness. The Strain of your Letter  
does not call upon me to sympathize  
with you ; but it, and Friendship toge-  
ther, call upon me to take to Pieces this  
mishapen and portentous Offspring of  
gloomy Imagination and Discontent ;  
with

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with the Hand of a Friend to lay open and dissect its several Parts ; and to display them in all their Uglinefs and Deformity before the naked Eye of your Reason : And I am positive that your calm and unbiaſſed Judgment will approve the friendly Office.

In the firſt Place, you complain of your Father. For Shame, my dear ! where is your Duty ? Where is your Tenderneſs and good Senſe ? Have you quite forgot that worthy good old Man, whoſe every Hour's Care and Study is to promote your Intereſt and Happineſs ? What greater Proof could he give of his paternal Affection, than the living a Widower for theſe twenty Years and  
more

more for the Sake of his two children? All the Matter is, that his Notions of Happiness are quite different from yours; and, perhaps, they are more just. For hath he not Years and Experience, which you have not? You say he locks up his Gold. Pray do you want for any of the Necessaries of Life? Are you not even indulged with many of its Superfluities? If he locks up his Gold, is it not for your Sake? Does he not deny himself many Pleasures, which he is capable of enjoying, but will not, lest your Interest should suffer? Consider him then, my dear Girl, as a truly affectionate Parent; as a most watchful Guardian over your tender Sex and Years; and a most careful and faithful

D

Steward

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Steward of your Gold and worldly Interest. As for your Brother, exert a proper Spirit, and you will soon find him as tame and submissive as he is now insolent and overbearing. And as for your *groveling Lover*, as you are pleased to call him, is he obliged to despise himself, because you do? I will tell you, my dear, how you must manage him. Treat him as a Gentleman to whom you are obliged for honouring you with his Affection. Take your own Way in shewing him that there is not that Similarity in your Taste and Dispositions which is necessary to Happiness in the married Life. And surely if he is a Man of common Sense, and I well know him to be such, he must  
set



## IDEAL TRIFLES. 51

set a greater Value upon his own Happiness, than to purchase your Hand at so great a Hazard. Then, my dear, depend upon it, when you lose the Lover, in him you will find a Friend. But, likewise, depend upon it, you will never free yourself from his impertinent Solicitations, as you are pleased to call them, while you treat him with Reserve and Disdain: For he takes your Reserve for Prudery, and your Disdain for Affectation. Viewing your Conduct in this Light, he would count himself no Man, if he could not conquer those weak Enemies, and so gain the Fair.

And this, you would have me believe, is owing to your Disgust of all

temporary Enjoyments, and to a Desire after immortal Pleasures which pass not away. Alas! my dear, you deceive yourself: It is not so: If it were, would it not teach you Patience and Resignation, those two first Christian Virtues? Therefore you profane the beautiful Lines of the Poet when you apply them to your present Case; unless you had altered a few Words, and given them thus,

‘Not Wealth nor State can fill my vast Desires.’

And Dr. Young should have said, that

—— ‘Your Reason sleeps, nor dreams the Cause.

‘The Cause how obvious, when your Reason wakes!

‘Your

## IDEAL TRIFLES. 53

‘ Your Grief is but your *Passion* in Disguise ;

‘ And Discontent is nought but *anxious Love*.’

Now, I hope, you understand me: Or must I speak still plainer; Hymen has great Joys for you: And I know you would gladly enlist yourself under his Banners, were a W—— permitted to lead you to the Altar. Believe me, my dear Girl, mortal Love is the great Cause of all your Unhappiness and Discontent. O, Hypatia, call up your own good Sense to see things as they really are. Suppose Mr. W—— should become your Husband: Do you think you could long be happy with him? No; it is impossible. Is he not proud, stubborn, and conceited? How little is

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he embellished by the best of Educations? Surely, Hypatia, there must be a great Meanness of Soul within, or such liberal Breeding would have made quite a different Man of him. Have you any just Ground to believe that he is either humane, good-natured, or even polite? Whatever Attempts he may have made to seem ornamented with these good Qualities, he has, with all his Artifices, been able to spread so very thin a Veil over the native Baseness of his Heart, as to hide it from none whom an unaccountable Passion had not prepossessed in his Favour. Add to all this, that he, upon almost every Occasion, affects to despise our Sex. Such an Affectation must proceed either  
from



from *Folly*, or, what is still worse, from *Malevolence*; and, I am sure, little Happiness can be expected, in the matrimonial State, from a Connection either with a *Fool*, or a *Brute*. In short, my dear, you may depend upon it, he would make any Woman of Spirit and Delicacy the most miserable of Wives. But stay Girl; I have not done yet. Pray do you intend to make Love to him? for I am sure the Man has never fairly and seriously made Love to you. What though he has often said that he admired your fine Face, and your genteel Air, and was fond of your agreeable Company; and paid you many more pretty flattering Compliments; these are but Things of Course, which

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he would as readily lavish on any other fine Woman, as on yourself. But has he ever told you that he admired your internal Beauties and Virtues ; and that, if you would consent to a Union with him for Life, he could and would love you, through all its Stages and Vicissitudes, to its latest Period. I hope you have too much Spirit and Delicacy ever to court any Man. No, my Friend, it is their Part to court us ; and let them tell their Love-Tale *in plain and direct Terms*, and over and over again, before we allow ourselves to believe them in earnest. You complain, that Mr. B— has now found an Advocate in your Father : And I can assure you that Mr. W—— has found a more powerful one  
in

in your Heart; which I beg and pray you will be very jealous of; trust not to its Guidance, nor listen to its Counsel; for, be assured, it will mislead you into a weary Path.

Pray, my dear, how do you pass your Time? Have you much of the Company of our agreeable Friends Philander and Palemon? How happy ought we to esteem ourselves in the Friendship of two such Men! Men for whom we may express the warmest Regard, without the Fear lest our Esteem should be misconstrued into Love; with whom we may converse like rational Creatures; and of whom we may make the freest Enquiries, without the Hazard of being

responsed

D 5

thought

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thought on the one Hand pedantic, or on the other impertinently and troublesome curious: For they well know our Dispositions and our Motives; and that it was neither the Desire of counting them among the Number of our Admirers, nor the Vanity of wishing to be applauded by Men of their Learning and Genius for Abilities of which we had the humblest Opinion, and of which we could boast nothing but the Pains we had taken in their Cultivation to the best of our Power and Opportunities: They well know that it was no such Motive which induced us so gladly to embrace their Friendship; but a serious Conviction of the great Advantage which must arise to us from a Correspondence



respondence with Men of such enlarged Minds, and extensive Education.

We every Day meet with Men who will tell us of our fine Faces, and all our other external Accomplishments; but very rarely with those who will shew us how much more nobly we might adorn ourselves; who will teach us to ornament and beautify our Minds; who will convince us that while we are so busy in improving our Persons, our less-worthy Part, we ought not to neglect our superior, our better Self; nor while studious to embellish the Casket, leave rough [uncut] and unpolished the valuable Jewel which it contains; who will tell us that our Minds are as capable of

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being improved as those of their own Sex; and that the same Genius and Taste which is able to accomplish a Piece of curious Needle-work, can, when properly directed, make no inconsiderable Advances in the Acquisition of Science and Literature; can with Pleasure and Facility pursue the Footsteps of a Newton in Natural Philosophy; of a Locke or a Baxter in Logic and Metaphysics; of a Wollaston or a Price in Moral Philosophy; and of a Hurd in Criticism. Adieu,

EUDOCIA.

LETTER

## LETTER VIII.

SOPHIA TO PHILANDER.

SINCE Philander is so good as to excuse my Freedom, and is pleased to look upon me as his Friend, I shall take the Liberty to tell him, that in reading his Epistle I was both charmed and vexed at the same Time. What, Sir, could not your never-enough-admired Muse find any Subject more engaging to employ your Strains? Had you no better Means of exercising your elegant Pen, than by pouring out Invectives against our weak defenceless Sex? Had the Fool or Coxcomb taken up his Pen to shew his Spleen, instead  
of

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of Wit, by railing at us, I should have disregarded it; but to find good Sense and Learning enlisted amongst our Foes, is a Mortification not to be endured. In short, Sir, I shall deal with you as one of the Popes did by a Poet who had libelled him in a very pretty Manner; he first rewarded him for his Wit, then punished him for his Ill-nature. So, Sir, I greatly thank you for the poetical Piece you sent me, and cannot enough commend it; Praise is the Poet's Recompence: But must at the same Time insist, as a Punishment for you, that you will in your next send me another in Praise of our Sex; as a Compensation for the Injustice you have done us, by making Choice of a Subject so much



## IDEAL TRIFLES. 63

to our Disadvantage. It is true, not only profane, but sacred History, in Appearance, mention Woman as the chief and first Cause of introducing Evil into human Nature: But it is in Appearance only, I imagine. The common Opinion seems to be, that Man was at first created perfect: And a State of Perfection implies no Want or Deficiency, in any Respect whatever. Yet we are told that the Creator thought it not good for him to be alone: And accordingly provided a Companion for him. From whence must be inferred, either that he had deviated from his first Rectitude, and so Woman was formed to stop the growing Mischief: Or, different from the common Notion, that

that his State was imperfect; and, if so, Woman owing her Being to Man, must of Consequence share in his Defects; and all her Faults be laid to his Charge, as proceeding originally from him.

I could wish Nature had made me a Poetess, that I might answer you in your own Way. I would fain attempt to mount the double-topped Hill; but Genius forbids me to aspire to the Heights of Parnassus, and I am too ambitiously inclined to content myself with the lowest Seat there, or any where else, if it might be avoided. Next to being endowed with the valuable Gift of Poetry myself, I always desire the Happiness of being acquainted with those

## IDEAL TRIFLES. 65

those who are possessed of it: And doubly thank my Stars for thus fortunately introducing me, not only into Philander's Company, but also into an Intimacy and Correspondence with him.

If you do not like the Subject set you as a Pennance, to write in Praise of Woman; any other of your Compositions will be equally agreeable to

Your much-obliged Friend,

SOPHIA.

LETTER

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### LETTER IX.

HYPATIA TO EUDOCIA.

O My Eudocia, you are kind, and yet you are cruel; severe at least. I stand self-condemned in many Points, since your amiable Hand pointed out to me my Errors: But yet, my Friend, you must excuse me when I tell you that I cannot *give up that Point*: That Mr. W—— never courted me, nor gave me sufficient Reason to believe that he loved me above the Rest of my Sex, and deserved a grateful Return of Affection. How can you do me the Injustice to think otherwise? Cannot you call to Mind that for these three Years  
past



past he has been my constant Attendant in all public Places? Always danced with me at Assemblies? Given my Health in all public Companies? Did he not, long since, beg to be permitted frequently to visit me? And has he not from that Time been a most constant and assiduous Visiter? Did he not make me a Present of a valuable Ring, which I took as a Token of his Love? Has he not often told me how greatly I was dear to him? Pray, Eudocia, recollect these Things, and then you will recall your too hasty, and, shall I say, unfriendly Assertion, that he never courted me. And think you that the Woman whom he marries must inevitably be miserable? Alas! my dear, how much are  
you

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you mistaken in his Character! Surely the Wife of such a Man must be supremely happy! How can she be otherwise?

O, my Friend, learn to be less hasty in your Judgment. Learn to be diffident and undetermined in your Opinion of Peoples' Characters, till, by long and nice Observation, you have just Reason to be satisfied that you know them thoroughly. Indeed, my dear, if you knew as much of him as I do, you would see him in the same amiable Light. I confess to strangers he may appear to disadvantage; for that Modesty and Reserve which hang about him, and which are always the Attendants

dants of an enlarged Mind, is mistaken by some People for Pride and Moroseness. And you, I hope and trust, I may reckon in the Number of those who have misapprehended his Character. I am sorry I should hold a different Opinion from yours in any Thing: But you must forgive if in this one Point my Notions are different from yours: A short Time will, I hope, bring you to the same Way of thinking.

Your Advice with Regard to Mr. B—— might be very good, were he like many other Men; but I do not know how far it would answer to practise it upon *him*. The Man is so much of a Fool, that he might consider such

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Treatment in quite a different Light from that in which it was intended he should consider it.

O, Eudocia, Nature has given you that graceful Ease and polite Boldness which she has denied me. You can treat your Lovers as you please. Some you make your Friends; but none your Enemies. But, indeed, you have not been teased as I have been; for all the World knows that you are engaged. O! my dear, what an envied Lot is yours! To be in a Manner adored by a Man of such Worth and Sense! and to have now so near a Prospect of the happiest of Unions taking Place, with the warmest Approbation of all your Friends. But  
I must



## IDEAL TRIFLES. 71

I must conclude; it grows very late.  
God bless you, my dear Friend. I know  
you have too great a Soul ever to let  
your own Prosperity and Happiness  
make you forget to sympathize with

Your poor distressed

HYPATIA.

LETTER

## LETTER X.

EUDOCIA to HYPATIA.

**I**NDEED, my dear Hypatia, you must not think me cruel: I am not so. Be assured that nothing but the greatest Tenderneſs and Love could urge me to the painful, though friendly office of pointing out the Errors of a dear Companion: But what could I do? My Conſcience would not ſuffer me to remain ſilent in ſuch a Caſe, when my Friend's future Happineſs was, and ſtill is, at Stake.

I cannot help fancying that I know much more of Mr. W——'s real Character

rather than you do. Indeed, my Hypatia, he is a strange Man: By your own Account he is so. If he has kept Company with you for these three Years, had he not an Opportunity in all that Time to declare, in a proper Manner, his Affection for you, if he had any such Intention? But you urge as a Proof of his Love, that he always dances with you at Assemblies, and drinks your Health in public Companies. For Shame, my dear, how could you ever persuade yourself to consider these as Proofs of either his Love or Esteem? Not one Man among ten Thousand chuses to let the World know when, and with whom, he is in Love. They all like to keep concealed that

E                      inestimable

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inestimable Treasure, till the Days of their Trial and Servitude are over, lest others should presume to vie with them for the important Prize. Alas! my dear, how much is your Judgment blinded by your Wishes, when from such a Conduct you conclude that he truly loves you.

Again,—“ He gave you a Ring:”—  
“ He begged to be permitted frequently  
“ to visit you :”—“ He has often told  
“ you how greatly you was dear to  
“ him.”—What he meant by the Ring  
I will not pretend to say, unless it was  
to try whether you would accept of, or  
refuse it. As for visiting you, I doubt  
not that he thought you agreeable  
enough



enough to spend a vacant Hour with. But I must not overlook what seems to be the Sheet-anchor of your Hopes.—“He has often told you how greatly “you was dear to him.”—And pray is not every Lady dear to a Man of Politeness and Gallantry? But more especially if possessed of such a Share of Beauty and Accomplishments as to make her Company, in private, highly agreeable; and, in public, from the Notice and Admiration which Beauty ever attracts, and the Envy which it excites toward the happy Man who seems to enjoy its Smiles, not a little flattering to a Heart not altogether destitute of Vanity. And cannot a Gentleman make such a Declaration, but

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he must immediately be looked upon as seriously and in good earnest your Lover? I protest, my dear, this Man has not the Sense and Spirit of a Man; he is no Man at all, if he is really in Love with you, and yet, though your Partiality for him is so apparent, has not the Courage to declare his Passion; either because his shallow Penetration cannot perceive how much you are disposed to favour him; or because he is afraid of engaging for Life with a Woman of your Endowments, who are possessed of every Requisite of Merit and Fortune to make any reasonable Man happy. Why, else, does he not plainly and expressly tell you how much he loves you? Why does he not  
name

name the *Grains and Scruples* of his Affection, and not leave it for you to do? It is possible that you might mistake, and reckon *Pounds instead of Grains*.

If I knew him as well as you do, I should see him, you think, in the same amiable Light. You must first give me the Pencil of your Imagination before I can see him in such agreeable Colours. Pray, my dear, did you never hear the Story of an eminent Statuary who for his Amusement undertook to carve the Statue of a beautiful Woman? He had no particular Object in his Eye, but wished to try how he could express with his Chissel that per-

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fect Idea of Beauty which he had conceived in his Mind. He succeeded so much beyond his Expectation, that he was charmed with his own Workmanship, and became passionately in Love with the Creation of his Fancy.

You will not, perhaps, be surprised, if, after all this, I should turn Advocate for Mr. B——. It would not be merely in Opposition to Mr. W——: For I really think the one a much worthier Man than the other, and therefore more deserving of your Approbation; and I am sure he has a sincere and tender Affection for you. What inexpressible Satisfaction have I often experienced in that good Man's Company,  
when



when viewing him in the Character of your Lover! When at any Time you have behaved to him with some Degree of Condescension, and have seemed more inclined to be kind to him than you usually are: Grown bold by such Encouragement, with what respectful Rapture have I heard him call you by the fond Appellation of *dear Girl*! You will excuse me, Hypatia; but such is my Want of Taste, that to me there appears to be more of the Tenderness of real Love in the affectionate, though humble Words, *dear Girl*, than in the more grand and pompous Appellation of *Angel*. And perhaps they who make Use of such extravagant Tropes, are reduced to that Expedient to supply the

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Defect of Passion; and do but endeavour to hide their Want of Ardour, and of the genuine Enthusiasm of Affection, by the deceitful Counterfeit of extravagant and hyperbolical Language. But his Passion, I am satisfied, is too sincere to need any such Embellishment. I wish, my dear, that you would put it into my Power to congratulate *you* upon having come to the noble Resolution of sacrificing Fancy and Passion to solid domestic Happiness, and *him* upon the pleasing Prospect that his Sincerity and Perseverance will soon be rewarded.

When I recommend Mr. B——, I recommend a Partner who, there is just Reason to believe, will to the End of  
Life

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Life continue a Lover and a Friend. Can the World give you more? Without such an Associate, can it give you half so much? Can it give you, without one, what is worth your Care? It must first deprive you of that social Disposition which the Deity has implanted in the Breast of every one of us, but which is most remarkably strong in all those, who, having acquired and cultivated a Delicacy of Taste and Sentiment, have Minds extremely susceptible of the more benevolent and gentle Affections.

To *such*, a virtuous Man, with all the Qualifications of a *Lover* and a *Friend*, must afford the greatest Happi-

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ness upon Earth; a Happiness which none of the so-much-prized Gifts of Fortune can purchase; and, in Comparison of which, they all appear little, mean, and worthless. For what are *Riches*? They are not necessary to Happiness; and though by enabling us to exercise our social Virtues in Acts of Benevolence and Generosity, they may contribute to our Happiness; yet, by Misapplication and Abuse, they too often prove an Obstruction to it.

And what is *Honour* and *Applause* but a Name, an unsubstantial Sound? unless by virtuous Actions we make it a Cause of our Happiness in endeavouring to merit it.

But



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But *Love* and *Friendship* are so conducive to Happiness, that in them we are taught the Felicity of even the Angels in Heaven in a great Measure consists.

Nothing is wanting here to make me pass my Time as agreeably as I could wish, but the Company of some dear moralizing Friend.

I hope, my Hypatia, that you do not sit moping at Home by yourself. If you dislike the Company of the gay and sprightly, you are happy in having it in your Power to cultivate that of the more sedate and contemplative. The human Mind is an active Being,

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and cannot be idle; therefore if we are not careful to furnish it with proper and worthy Objects, it will be apt to fix its Attention on improper and unworthy ones; such as, being frequently in its View, and often turned to for Amusement, will at Length so corrupt its Taste, as to render it incapable of distinguishing true Happiness from false. Thus corrupted and blinded, we are easily imposed upon with false Coin; and, while we think we are purchasing Happiness, are grasping at Misery and Woe.

I cannot close this Letter without taking Notice of that Part of yours, in which you congratulate me on my

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Connection with Mr. W——. There, my Hypatia, you touch the tenderest Strings of my Heart. You bring me down to all the Softness of my Sex, and press upon me a Crowd of tender, lovely Ideas. But yet, my dear, I am afraid to indulge them: Prudence forbids; then why should you encourage me? You consider my Happiness, in this Respect, as almost secure, and within my Grasp. I dare not do so. Alas! my dear, how little can we depend upon Futurity in this World! For my Part, I have laid it down as a Maxim never to defer my Happiness to a *future Day*; but to enjoy, as I ought, the Blessings of the *present*: And that, if I would never be disappointed, I

ought

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ought never to be too secure. But though I would not too confidently assure myself of a prosperous Event of this Affair, yet, on the other Hand, I would not forebode an unfavourable one. I wish to leave it with Resignation in the Hand of Providence; and hope that, whatever may be my Fate in this Respect, I am prepared for it.

Adieu, my dear Friend. I hope you will take the Freedom of this Epistle as no mean Proof of a sincere and honest Friendship. Pray remind our esteemed Palemon and Philander that there still exists such a Person as their and your

EUDOCIA.

LETTER



## LETTER XI.

PALEMON to SOPHIA.

OF all the Blessings which this Life is capable of affording, none appears to me more exquisite in the Enjoyment, or more valuable in its Consequences, than that which we experience in the social Intercourse of Souls, when improved and expanded with generous and enlarged Sentiments, and ripened into Friendship. For as of all human Enjoyments, those of the Mind are the most important and satisfactory, so, of the mental ones, those of Benevolence and Friendship are of all others (the Pleasure arising from the Testimony

## 88 IDEAL TRIFLES.

mony of a good Conscience excepted)  
the most truly estimable.

True Friendship, an Affection which is oftener talked of than felt, is no other than Benevolence in its most improved State: It is that to which all Virtue tends; it is an Attachment to Individuals in this frail imperfect State, which, perhaps, in another and better World, all the Good and Virtuous may feel for each other: It is the Perfection of Mind, and Mind is the Perfection of the Creation:

Mind, Mind alone, bear Witness Earth and Heaven!  
The living Fountains in itself contains  
Of beauteous and sublime; here, Hand in Hand,  
Sit paramount the Graces; here enthron'd,

Cœlestial

## IDEAL TRIFLES. 89

Cœlestial Venus, with divinest Airs,  
Invites the Soul to never-fading Joy.

Possessed with such Sentiments as these, I cannot but feel the most grateful Sense of my own happy Lot, in having acquired the Friendship of several who are eminent for their Virtue and Merit; and often felicitate myself on the, I could almost say, Profusion of the most heart-felt Enjoyments which I daily experience from that pure and salutary Source; not a small Portion of which I derive from my Friendship with Sophia; a Friendship, which notwithstanding I had always the most favourable Opinion of the Abilities and Dispositions of her Sex, yet the Tyranny  
of

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of Education, which few have Courage enough to oppose and surmount, gave me, for a long Time, but little Hope that I should ever obtain the Friendship of a female Philosopher: For such, I think, I may without Suspicion of Flattery call you; since with Youth and Affluence, and a Taste for the elegant Accomplishments and Amusements of polite Life, you have not suffered yourself to be captivated with them, or to esteem them above their real Value; but have learned to think lightly of them when put in Competition with the more rational and refined ones of the Mind; and can be delighted with the Company of “Night, Leisure, and “Tranquillity;” and, with Talents and Accom-



## IDEAL TRIFLES. 91

Accomplishments fitted for shining in the gay Circles of the *beau Monde*, could wish to be a Fellow-citizen with a grave Colony of learned Men and Philosophers.

Your Love of Philosophy is so much the more just and rational, as it did not spring from a gloomy Disposition, from an envious Antipathy to the Pleasures of chearful Life, arising from an Incapacity of enjoying them; but, from a Comparison of the intrinsic Worth of both, you preferred the *former*, without rejecting the innocent Amusements of the *latter*. You did not banish Pleasure; you only refined it; made it more rational; for your Philosophy discards  
not

not the Graces. You, like the judicious Ancients, who made the God of Wisdom and Poetry the same, think Chearfulness and Elegance inseparable from true Philosophy; and that Wisdom and Taste, springing from the same common Parents, Truth and Nature, can never so prosper and flourish as when, advancing Hand in Hand, they mutually aid and support each other. Thus united, they comprehend the most extensive Knowledge of human Nature, and constitute that true sublime Philosophy, that Mistress of the rational Soul, of which the divine Milton was so enthusiastic an Admirer, and of which with Rapture he exclaims in the Masque of Comus,

How

## IDEAL TRIFLES. 93

How charming is divine Philosophy !  
Not harsh and crabbed, as dull Fools suppose,  
But musical as is Apollo's Lute,  
And a perpetual Feast of nectar'd Sweets,  
Where no crude Surfeit reigns.

That you may continue to be a Pattern to your Sex of every Thing that is good and amiable; and may long enjoy the Felicity which is due to such distinguished Virtues, is the sincere Wish of

Your Friend, &c.

PALEMON.

LETTER

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LETTER XII.

SOPHIA to PALEMON.

**A**Ccording to the general Way of answering Letters, I should take Notice of every particular Paragraph and Sentence in yours, and strike out some Thought from each in Return. But the more I peruse your Epistle, the more I am at a Loss in what Manner I should take the Encomiums which it contains; and of which, indeed, the whole is full. It appears to my View as a Multiplying-glass, exhibiting, from several Mirrors at once, a most pleasing and agreeable Picture, drawn by a skilful Painter's Hand, which he would



fain persuade me to take for my own. Should I reply by Way of Compliment, it would seem as if I thought those Praises all my due, which would look like downright Arrogance; and to refuse them would savour of Rusticity, if not of Rudeness, since it would be to call in Question either my Friend's Judgment or Sincerity. I therefore pass them by in Silence: And as I am a dear Lover of Liberty in every Respect, I shall make bold to break through the Rules which Custom seems to prescribe in such Cases, whenever Inclination directs, or Opportunity offers. In short, whenever I shall think it unnecessary, or improper, to answer the Thoughts of my Correspondent, I shall for the future  
turn

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turn a deaf Ear, and start another Subject.

In a Letter which you favoured me with some Time ago, you was so obliging as to send me your Picture. In return for a Present so agreeable, I have now got one for you; which though none of the best, and drawn but by an indifferent Hand, yet may serve at least to shew my Gratitude.

It is the Portrait of an IDEALIST; for I know not by what other Name to call it. And as I never yet met with an Account of this Character in any Author, I flatter myself that perhaps it  
may

## IDEAL TRIFLES. 97

may have something new in it even to you.

AN IDEALIST is one of an uncommon Turn of Thinking, so little like that of the Generality of Mortals, that he is by the greatest Part of them considered as not quite right in his Head; and of those who are disposed to judge more favourably of him, few are willing entirely to exculpate him from the Charge of being whimsical. Indeed he so much differs from the *Lump of Mankind*, if I may so express myself, that he is hardly to be called an Inhabitant of Earth. His dwelling is chiefly in the rich and fertile Regions of Imagination; which,

F                      though

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though accounted visionary by the unthinking Vulgar, are of more real Worth to him than Peruvian Treasures.

From these Fairy Fields he rarely descends into common Life; and, when he does, scarcely ever by Choice; and hurries back again to his favourite Retreats with as much Alacrity as a Miser to his hoarded Gold. Here he sits unfettered from the World; and matters not the Gifts of Fortune, whether possessed of them or not, since he can make, whenever he pleases, the Riches of the whole Creation his own, by his powerful magic Skill: For he is really more potent in that Art, than the Magician



cian in Shakespeare's *Tempest* is feigned to be.

If he is fond of Travelling, he envies not the Rich or Great their splendid Vehicles and gaudy Equipages: Nor need he: The rapid Car of Fancy stands ready at his call; and with the greatest Ease and Swiftneſs he viſits Earth's remotest Wonders.

Each Object that preſents itſelf is ſubſervient to his Wiſhes. He roves on the gilded Inſect's Wings, borrowing its finely-framed Optics to explore the hidden Beauties of Nature in her minuteſt Operations: Or, to ſurvey her Works

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at large, he mounts and sails upon the floating Gossamer through Air's immeasurable Fluid, Columbus-like, in quest of conjectured Worlds. Here he makes Acquaintance

- With all the Sons of Reason, scattered wide
- Through habitable Space, —

and returns Home, like a Vessel richly fraught with Merchandize, from a pleasing prosperous Voyage.

But it is hardly possible to enumerate all the surprising Feats and different Operations of this odd and extraordinary Personage. These are but his Features in Miniature. Were they to be drawn

## IDEAL TRIFLES. 101

drawn at large, the Picture would look too gigantic ; and, perhaps, the Design might appear less distinct and pleasing. It is not so well as I could wish ; but I hope you will pardon the Painter's Unskilfulness for the Sake of

SOPHIA.

F 3

LET.

## LETTER XIII.

SOPHIA TO PHILANDER.

I AM surpris'd at Palemon's asserting that he has experienced such a Happiness on Earth!—"The greatest he "could imagine!"—For my own Part I cannot remember ever to have enjoyed any Pleasure, but my Imagination still went beyond the present Satisfaction, and led me on to wish for something more. Every Joy wants some Addition; not excepting *the Feast of Reason*. I would have it more lasting, and relish it more fully. The Thought of the Shortness of its Duration robs me of half the Pleasure of the Enjoyment;

and



## IDEAL TRIFLES. 1103

and the Keeness with which I should otherwise relish it is taken off by my too-eager Desire to taste it in its highest Relish and Perfection. What Pity it is that our Greediness of Happiness should frustrate itself; and that in the Midst of the most rational Enjoyment we should allow the Impertinence of Imagination to mar our Satisfaction, by representing to us how soon the agreeable Scene must change, and be succeeded by those of common Life at best; and, often, by very gloomy and disagreeable ones.

If I ask my own Heart, what would content it, I never receive any satisfactory Answer; but observe that my De-

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fires, whenever the Idea of Happiness presents itself, always lose themselves in *boundless, endless, and inconceivable.*

I must therefore be of your Opinion, that a continually-progressive State of Bliss seems more suited to the Constitution of the human Mind, than a full and mature one. An unlimited Prospect pleases more than one that is confined, even where they are both agreeable.

Yet though we may be vastly happier in some Stages of our Existence hereafter, than in others; yet, perhaps, we shall still think ourselves, even whilst we are passing through the lowest, almost within the Reach of perfect Felicity,

## IDEAL TRIFLES. 105

city, till we rise to a more elevated State, and more glorious Views are opened before us.

SOPHIA.

F. 5.

LET.

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LETTER XIV.

PALEMON TO SOPHIA.

DEAR MADAM, *Tuesday Morning.*

THE Description of an IDEALIST, in the last Letter which you favoured me with, pleased me very much. If there could be such a Character, your IDEALIST, methought, bid fair to be the truly-happy Man. I was much entertained in observing the striking Likeness between that Character, as drawn by you, and the wise Man of the Stoic Epictetus; the Principles of whose Philosophy were then fresh in my Memory. Your Notions are just the Doctrine of that Philosopher in its Holiday Suit;



when, throwing aside the inelegant and rustic Garb of Stoical Severity, it puts on the more genteel and ornamental Attire of Platonic Fancy: But with this Difference, that your Philosophy is the most likely to be productive of Happiness, as it is less extravagant and more consistent with the real State of Human Nature. *His* is *always* rigid and severe; *sometimes* unnatural: *Yours* is the very Reverse, mild and gentle; and the very Plan marked out to us by Nature herself. *His* Philosophy would eradicate the Passions; while *yours*, considering them as a Part of our Nature, and that they were given to us for wise and benevolent Purposes of Happiness, only aims at turning them into a proper

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Channel, and at purifying and refining them. And farther, *yours* is social and humane; but the *Philosophy of Epictetus* is selfish and ungenerous. For what can be more selfish, more opposite to the natural Feelings of Humanity, than, agreeable to his Precepts; not to sympathize with the Grief of a Friend in Affliction, or with his Joy in Prosperity; lest you should make yourself wretched with the Misery of others, and allow your Happiness to depend upon them, and not upon yourself. Mistaken Philosophy! had your Author examined into Nature with greater Attention; had he felt the exquisite Bliss which well-regulated Passions can procure us; had he ever enjoyed the Elysium of the sympa-

sympathizing Soul; and had he considered that no Part of our Constitution could have been framed by a wise and benevolent Being, but it must have been designed for some good and important End; he would certainly have corrected your Error, and, instead of indulging you in unfeeling Selfishness, he would have moulded your Temper into the generous Sensibility of Humanity and Benevolence. But since, either through Insensibility or Prejudice, his Heart was steeled, and rendered incapable of feeling with his Fellow-mortals; I bid adieu to the Philosophy which such a Temper modelled, except when I find her in her more rational Moments of Meditation,

on

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on any other Subject but that of the  
social Affections.

Adieu proud Doctrines; you've no Joys for me  
While Sympathy is absent. Rugged, steep,  
And devious are the Paths your Feet pursue,  
Nor lead to chearful Scenes, and Fields of Bliss.  
But come, my fair IDEALIST, my Friend,  
Through flowery Meads of Philosophic Fancy  
With you I'll roam; for Happiness is *there*.  
*There, &c. &c.*——

*Wednesday Evening.*

You will pardon Pegasus if, being  
surprised yesterday in the Midst of his  
Career by the sudden Appearance of an  
Object which always used to alarm him,  
he capered and flounced about, and, in  
the Hurry of the Fright, lost the Load  
with



## IDEAL TRIFLES. 111

with which he was posting to Parnassus, and it has not since been found.

The most precious Part of the Burden was a large Parcel of fine Woollen, of various Colours, spun by Fancy as a Present for the Muses; who had promised to weave it into a Representation of the Pleasures of the IDEAL PHILOSOPHY.

Though it should be found again, it is feared that it will be too much damaged to be fit for the Purpose of the Muses.

In one Part of your Epistle you seem, I think, to hint at a Suspicion of Flattery.

tery. As it is not now by me, being among my other Things on the Road from E——, I may be mistaken. But, indeed, my Friend, if there be any Letter which may appear to you in that Light, you ought rather to chide the friendly Ardour of a warm Imagination, than think that I could have so mean an Opinion of you, or was so weak myself, as to imagine that you would be pleased with such a gilded Bauble.

I remember once, in particular, to have had a long Conversation with Philander concerning the Nature and Sources of Happiness; but do not recollect that I ever asserted, what I find alluded to in

## IDEAL TRIFLES. 113

one of your late Letters to him, that  
 "I had experienced on Earth the greatest  
 "Happiness I could imagine." I might,  
 perhaps, make use of somewhat similar  
 Expressions; but Philander certainly  
 mistook the Meaning of them. The  
 Fault might be in my Want of Perspi-  
 cuity; for it often happens, when a  
 Matter appears clear and easy to our-  
 selves, that we are apt to think there  
 needs but little to explain what is so  
 perfectly familiar to us; and are dis-  
 posed to be too negligent and incurious  
 in the Choice of apt Terms to convey it  
 in its full Magnitude and Proportion to  
 another. It is probable I might assert,  
 that I had sometimes experienced such  
 perfect Happiness, as, for a short Space  
 of

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of Time, not to have been sensible of the least Deficiency. But I own that this has never been of long Duration. All I can farther boast of is, that, when my Imagination has discovered Deficiencies, I have been able, by the Assistance of Reason, to avoid depriving myself of the Satisfaction which the present Object was adapted to afford me, by stifling every rising Wish for those which I perceived were absent. This, I think, every one *may do*; and it is what every one *ought to do*, who would be as happy as his present imperfect State will admit of. And this, according to my Notion of it, IDEALISM teaches. I shall only add, that your Observations and Sentiments on this Subject seem perfectly  
just;



just; and could not but meet with the warmest Approbation of all your Friends here, among whom there is no one who has a more true Esteem for you, than your sincere

And affectionate Friend,

PALEMON.

LETTER

## LETTER XV.

EUDOCIA TO HYPATIA.

YOU may now, my dear Hypatia, tell all my Friends at E——, that I expect soon to be able to fix the Day of my return to them and you. My Stay in Yorkshire would not have been quite so long, but for the Hopes I have, for some Time, entertained of hearing a good Account of my dear Almira, and the Expectation of receiving, ere this Time, an Invitation to come to her; as I had a short Note from Miss F—, about two Months ago, wherein she informs me, that her Cousin's intellectual Faculties are at Length perfectly restored,

stored, but that her Health has suffered so much, that it is thought she cannot live long.

O, my Almira, I once thought it impossible that any Thing should break or interrupt our Friendship, or but for a Moment make us Strangers to each other! Are you so unacquainted with my Heart, as to imagine me only capable of being the Companion of your joyful Days? In the Days of your Affliction I would also be your Companion, your Friend, and your Comforter, would you but permit me. To me the House of Mourning is better than the House of Rejoicing.

It

It has grieved me much to be forgot by so dear a Friend. I know not what to think of the two Months Silence. I dare not indulge myself in conjecturing the Cause of it. In whatever Light I view it, I cannot but be afflicted. I have nothing to do but to weep. If it be owing to a Relapse into her former Melancholy, I must weep with her other Friends for the Loss of her Reason: If to a Change in her Affection, I must weep in Private for the Loss of her Heart.

That noble Youth, her Brother, Miss F— told me was expected to return to England in a few Weeks. The Accounts he has received of his Sister's

State



State of Health bring him sooner than he intended. He designs to carry her to the South of France, or to some Part of Italy, in Hope that the fostering Mildness of these warmer Climates may contribute to the Restoration of her lost Health. O, that they could find out some Balm to heal a broken Heart.

Perhaps I shall never see and converse with her again in this World. That Thought is more than I can bear. But I have done. May her chaste Spirit meet that Happiness in another World, which was denied her in this.

Adieu,

EUDOCIA.

LETTER

## LETTER XVI.

EUDOCIA TO HYPATIA.

I Cannot say, my dear, that I ever experienced that enthusiastic Kind of Love, to which you find yourself so much disposed, and which you describe so feelingly. And, indeed, I do not wish to be acquainted with it; for I fancy that I am much better without it: By your own Confession I am; for you acknowledge that it too often disturbs the moral Oeconomy, and Self-government of the Soul.

You have long observed, you say, that I have discovered more Ardour in  
my

my Friendship, than in my Love. This Charge, if just, might well alarm me. Indeed it did so. But, after a very strict Examination into my own Heart, I cannot find that my Love for *that worthy Man* has undergone the least Diminution or Change. No, Hypatia, it is not in the Power of Years or Absence to erase his Image from my Breast: there it was early impressed; and there, I hope, it will ever remain. If my Love for him is not blown up to that violent Flame of enthusiastic Passion which you mention, yet it is sufficiently warm and lively; and what it loses in Violence, it is likely to gain in Steadiness and Durability. That it is calm, and but little apt to blaze out into Rapture, is easily

G

accounted

accounted for. It began early, and increased gradually and imperceptibly. When, by a thousand kind Offices, he had engaged my Affection, I was yet but a Child, for what better can a Girl of fourteen Years of Age be reckoned in Love Matters? and knew not that I loved him. My Regard for him partook more of Gratitude than of any other Passion. He was my Guardian; the Protector of my helpless Youth and Innocence; the Instructor of my Morals, and the Regulator of my Taste. His Kindness to me in every Respect; his Care of my Interest, sometimes even to the Neglect of his own, were unexampled, and could not fail to excite in me the most grateful Sense of his Generosity



nerosity and Goodness. I felt the same Esteem, Reverence, and Affection for him, as I had done for my Parents: But it was long before I discovered, that there was a Degree of Tenderness in my Regard for him, which I had never experienced for any other Person. This, however, I was willing to consider as no more than an uncommon Degree of Gratitude, for the uncommon and unmerited Benefits which I had received from him; and would never allow myself to believe that I could have the Presumption to love a Man, who, tho' not quite thirty Years of Age, and tolerably handsome, was yet much older than myself, and ought rather to be considered in the Light of a Parent;

till, after I had arrived at Years of more Maturity, I began to suspect, from numberless little Attentions and Assiduities in which he had never before indulged himself, and was at length satisfied by his own Declaration, that he loved me. Much, he told me, of his future Happiness depended upon me. Such an Explanation, you may easily imagine, was no Way disagreeable to me. I received it as I ought. I now perceived that there was more of Love than I had been willing to persuade myself in my regard for him. I felt, and readily acknowledged, a mutual Affection; and thought it a peculiar Happiness that I could contribute so essentially to the future Felicity of my Benefactor, without  
trans-

transgressing my Duty, or doing Violence to my Inclination. Some important Affairs, you know, have obliged him to reside for several Years abroad; and made it proper that our Union should be delayed till they can be settled. It is easy to perceive, that a Passion, thus gradually and imperceptibly contracted, may be strong and invincible; without being violent and impetuous: Or, whatever it may have been in the first Transports of its Discovery and Acknowledgment, it must long ago have lost *its Novelty*, after having been for so many Years open and avowed, and, with *its Novelty*, all that Extravagance of Passion which may have formerly debased it.

It will, I am sure, give you Pleasure to hear that I have just received Letters from him, in which he tells me, that he has now brought his Affairs nearly to a Conclusion; and hopes it will not be long before we shall meet again, and be, by a nearer Connection, happier than we have ever yet been in each other.

I look forward with Pleasure, though not with Impatience, to the Time when I shall become the Wife of so good and amiable a Man. And, if I mistake not, our Union bids fair to be productive of lasting Happiness, because our Passion is calm and sedate, and well disciplined in the School of Reason.

That



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That you, my Friend, may be less  
ardent, and more prudent, and conse-  
quently more happy in your Affection  
than you have heretofore been, is the  
sincere Wish of,

Yours most tenderly,

EUDOCIA.

G 4

LET.

## LETTER XVII.

SOPHIA TO PHILANDER.

AS I profess myself a Member of the religious, as well as of the political World, the true Penitent has always a just Title to my Forgiveness : And I am content that Philander should pass for such. Thus far all is well. But, I must tell you, the Word *Neglect* sounds very harsh and untunable to a musical Ear, especially when it is of the feminine Gender. Could you not have chosen some softer Term to excuse your long Silence, whose smooth sequacious Syllables might have conveyed some less-displeasing Notion to the Mind?

Had

Had you taken Indolence in its Stead, methinks I could then have flattered myself, that the Love of Ease had been for these five Months past your ruling Passion; and that I had but shared the Fate of your other Friends. But, alas! Philander pays not the least Regard to female Weakness; and with all the Austerity of a true Philosopher, out comes the plain downright Truth at once, and proves to be *Neglect*. This, one would imagine, ought to kill the fondest Conceits that Vanity could raise: Far from it, I assure you: Vanity, like the industrious Bee, can draw the most delicious Sweets from Bitters, and now persuades me, that by this plain Dealing you clearly shew the high Esteem you entertain for

me; that by paying no Regard to my Sex's Foibles, you think I am above them; and view me only "in the calm  
 "Light of mild Philosophy." It is certainly so. "Of what vast Consequence am I."

Your idealistical Maxims please me much. That our Creator designed us for Happiness, and that this Happiness depends greatly on ourselves, I make no Doubt of. The whole Tenor of the Sacred Writings is, to inculcate this Belief. But I must understand this of our future State, since I think Happiness is rather too high a Term for any Thing we can possess here below. For let our Ideas be ever so proper, or our Notions



of Things ever so just, yet, as we depend so much upon outward Circumstances for our Well-being, and these are so various and uncertain, such a Number of them must concur to render our State tolerably pleasing to us, that the best we can arrive at in this World, is but the *Shadow of Happiness*. As to Ease, Content, Pleasure, and the like, I look upon these, at best, only as the Attributes of Happiness; whilst she is the bright Assemblage of them all!

Though the Pleasures of the Imagination are the least dependent of any, yet I cannot but lament, that outward Things have too much Influence over them. Disagreeable Objects will often

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chase those bright Ideas far away, and leave a heavy Gloom instead. Sounds that are irksome to the Ear, will scatter and confound the loveliest Images of the Mind, and change its Harmony to Discord. In short, I think this World a very disagreeable Place, and if there were any other Passage out of it, but that gloomy one of the Grave, should be heartily glad to quit it. But,

“Rather than so, ah let me still survive!”

Thus far was an Answer, which I wrote two Months ago, to yours of December : But several disagreeable Occurrences falling out, one of which was the Sickness of a dear Relation, which  
is

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is now ended by Death, prevented my finishing it. I now send it in its unfinished State, as I find myself still indisposed for writing; and fear, ere I begin to be otherwise, you will be ready to think yourself forgot by

Your sincere though afflicted Friend,

SOPHIA.

LETTER

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LETTER XVIII.

EUDOCIA TO HYPATIA.

A Few Days ago I received a Packet from Miss F——, in which was inclosed a Letter from poor Almira. It is the first that she has written since the Death of her Damon, as she used to call him: And it is now more than a Year since that amiable Man was so unexpectedly, and by so terrible an Accident, snatched from her and from the World\*.

\* This Gentleman and Almira were just upon the Eve of being united in Marriage. He was killed by a Fall from his Horse, in Hunting, a few Weeks before the intended Nuptials. She accidentally met his bloody Corpse as they were bringing it out of the fatal Field.

It



## IDEAL TRIFLES. 135

It is no Wonder that the Violence of this sudden Shock was too great for her delicate Nerves to sustain without being considerably injured. The Effects of it were, indeed, truly alarming. What they were I have formerly told you. You remember that for some Days after the dreadful Sight she was in continual Fits, which were so violent as to threaten the total Diffolution of her tender Frame: that these left her quite delirious; in which State she continued without Intermission or Abatement for about a Week; and though after that Time her Raving was frequently interrupted by short lucid Intervals, and gradually remitted of its Violence, yet it continued in a considerable Degree for  
near

near half a Year. Thus far you have already had a full Account of her Sufferings; and are, no doubt, pleased to hear that I have at Length received a Letter from her; since you will naturally conclude that her Insanity has either altogether left her, or is at least much abated: And your Conclusion, my dear, is perfectly right. But, alas! all is not well yet. Her poor Nerves, Miss F— tells me, have received such a Shock, as it is feared they will never overcome. “ It is almost impossible, she adds, to “ conceive what an Alteration one Year “ has made upon her. Her fine Spirits “ are quite broken; her beautiful Countenance is totally disguised by a yellow Melancholy; and, but for the “ Tears

“ Tears which incessantly sparkle in her  
 “ Eyes, you would frequently take her  
 “ for a Statue, rather than for an ani-  
 “ mate Being.” But, as I suppose you  
 are impatient to see Almira’s Letter, I  
 shall here transcribe it, before I proceed  
 any farther with Miss F——’s Account  
 of her. It is as follows :

“ Call me not unkind, Eudocia, be-  
 “ cause I have taken no Notice of the  
 “ many friendly Epistles with which  
 “ you have favoured me for some Time  
 “ past: Believe me, since my poor  
 “ Mind has been restored to some De-  
 “ gree of Composure and Self-govern-  
 “ ment, of which it has so long been  
 “ unhappily deprived, if I have ever  
 “ had

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“ had an anxious Thought for a Soul  
“ in this World since my Damon left it,  
“ it has been for Eudocia. For though  
“ my poor bleeding Heart has been  
“ chiefly the Mansion of Anguish and  
“ Despair since he was torn from it,  
“ yet think not that that wintry Storm  
“ *killed all Affection in it.*

“ But, oh! Eudocia, this is not the  
“ Garden of Eden, as we are all too  
“ apt to imagine when warmed with  
“ the Sunshine of Health and Prospe-  
“ rity. How greedily do we then feast  
“ upon its alluring Fruits; which, in-  
“ deed, when partaken of in Modera-  
“ tion, are not only grateful but whole-  
“ some; but become a certain Poison if  
“ devoured



IDEAL TRIFLES. 139

“ devoured with Intemperance, unless  
“ timely remedied by an efficacious An-  
“ tidote. Now nothing so powerfully  
“ counteracts their pernicious Effects as  
“ heavy Afflictions; and we, who have  
“ rioted most profusely, require the  
“ strongest Remedies to correct the Poi-  
“ son of our mistaken Enjoyments.  
“ For,

“ How like a Worm was I wrapt round and  
round

“ In filken Thought, which reptile Fancy spun,  
“ Till darken'd Reason lay quite clouded o'er  
“ With soft Conceit of endless Comfort here,  
“ Nor yet put forth her Wings to reach the  
Skies!

“ Yes,

140 IDEAL TRIFLES.

“ Yes, my Friend, there was a Time  
“ when I had placed my deluded Heart,  
“ with all its Hopes and Expectations,  
“ on this World and its Enjoyments;  
“ but Heaven was pleased to make my  
“ Joys expire;—yes,—

“ They dy’d with thee my Damon; thy last Sigh  
“ Dissolved the Charm. ———

“ As my Expectations were great,  
“ so hath been my Disappointment.  
“ But they are now at an End; and I  
“ can look back with a mournful Kind  
“ of Pleasure on both; since the for-  
“ mer, though delightful, were leading  
“ me astray from the true Paths of  
“ Happiness; and the latter, however  
“ painful, hath been the Means of  
“ bringing

IDEAL TRIFLES. 141

“ bringing me back into the right  
“ Way, and of making me fly for  
“ Refuge to Reason and Religion, as  
“ the only Sources of real Comfort in  
“ Affliction. I have now *learned* to  
“ hope no longer for solid and lasting  
“ Happiness in those perishable and  
“ delusive Enjoyments in which we are  
“ too apt to look for it. I have *learned*  
“ so to relish the good Things of this  
“ Life, as not to rest satisfied with  
“ them; but to look forward to a bet-  
“ ter and more perfect State, where  
“ alone complete and undecaying Hap-  
“ piness is to be found.

“ And, truly, it is now Time to  
“ have my Views opening beyond the  
“ narrow

“ narrow Limits of this World, in  
 “ which I shall probably be but for a  
 “ little while an Inhabitant: For I feel  
 “ an universal Weakness and Decay of  
 “ the natural Powers of my Body,  
 “ which lead me to expect that at best  
 “ I cannot hold out long; and that the  
 “ gentlest Gale of a Fever, or of any  
 “ other slight accidental Disorder,  
 “ would speedily waft my Soul to its  
 “ eternal Abode.

“ What will be the Enjoyments of  
 “ the Souls of the good and virtuous  
 “ in that boundless Eternity to which  
 “ we are all hastening, we know  
 “ not: But we have Reason to believe,  
 “ that they will be inconceivably great;  
 “ and



IDEAL TRIFLES. 143

“ and that they will in a good Measure,  
“ if not altogether, be unconnected  
“ with Body and Sense. For our Bo-  
“ dies, if we shall be possessed of Bodies  
“ in that more perfect State, will doubt-  
“ lessly be formed in a much finer  
“ Mould, and be less a Clog and In-  
“ cumbrance to the Activity and Recti-  
“ tude of the Mind, than we here ex-  
“ perience them.

“ What a happy Ease and Freedom  
“ of Exertion will the Soul Experience  
“ when it shall be thus disincumbered  
“ from bodily Impediment! How will  
“ it exult in its Enlargement when it  
“ shall feel every Faculty dilate and ex-  
“ pand itself; shall view distinctly and  
“ com-

144 IDEAL TRIFLES.

“ completely an almost infinite Num-  
“ ber of Objects, which are now either  
“ obscure or invisible through their Re-  
“ moteness, Magnitude, or Minuteness;  
“ shall fully and clearly comprehend  
“ what is now abstruse, mysterious, and  
“ incomprehensible; shall conceive with  
“ ineffable Sublimity; and feel inces-  
“ santly the warmest Benevolence and  
“ Affection for all its Brethren and Fel-  
“ low-citizens of the Universe!

“ On such a View of the Matter,  
“ how vast does the Difference appear,  
“ in Point of Dignity and Importance,  
“ between that immaterial Spark of the  
“ Divine Being, and its gross corporeal  
“ Vehicle; and at how low a Rate do

“ we

“ we esteem the latter in Comparison  
 “ with the former!—Indeed, in what-  
 “ ever Light we consider it, it is suffi-  
 “ ciently evident that the human Soul  
 “ was created for far worthier Purposes  
 “ than to be for ever immersed in the  
 “ Pleasures of Body and Sense: For  
 “ even supposing there were no future  
 “ State, it would be for the Interest of  
 “ the human Species to cultivate the  
 “ Faculties of the Mind, rather than  
 “ be solicitous about the Body; the  
 “ Pleasures of the one being infinitely  
 “ more exquisite than those of the  
 “ other. But when Reason and Reve-  
 “ lation conspire to assure us that there  
 “ is a future State, the Happiness of  
 “ which will assuredly be intellectual;

H

“ and

“ and that we are placed on this Earth  
 “ in Order to fit ourselves for the Par-  
 “ ticipation of that spiritual Bliss ; and  
 “ that our mental Faculties and Enjoy-  
 “ ments will be improving, accordingly  
 “ as we rightly and diligently use them,  
 “ to all Eternity——

“ But I am quite spent with writing  
 “ these few Lines, and must conclude.  
 “ I was going to say, *Adieu* ; and God  
 “ knows whether it may not be a last  
 “ *Adieu*.

“ You will accept of, as a Memorial  
 “ of your Friends, two miniature Pic-  
 “ tures ; and a Copy of some Verses,  
 “ which, though unfinished, I wish to  
 “ have



" have preserved for the Sake of the  
 " Author; and you I know will be  
 " choice of them, both for his Sake and  
 " for mine.

" God bless you, my Friend; and  
 " may your Passage to the Grave be  
 " more gently sloped than mine.

" Farewell,

" ALMIRA."

Dear Hypatia, in what Situation of  
 Mind has reading this Letter left you?  
 If I may judge of you by myself, you  
 have not one Wish remaining which  
 the Treasures of this World can satisfy.

H 2

Almira

Almira has led you into the Garden of Eden, and presented you with so delightful a View of the Beauties and Enjoyments of that happy Region, that every Thing else must appear, on a Comparifon, unworthy of your Admiration or Regard.

— “ May your Passage to the Grave  
“ be more gently ftoped than mine.”—  
Alas! dear Creature, thine has been  
fleep and rugged indeed; thrown down  
from one Precipice to another!

Miss F—— fays, that fhe fat by her  
moft of the Time while fhe was wri-  
ting the above. She then proceeds as  
follows :

— “ She

— “ She was remarkably calm and  
 “ composed till she came towards the  
 “ Conclusion of her Letter; when her  
 “ Countenance suddenly changed, and  
 “ her Mind seemed to be considerably  
 “ agitated. She laid down her Pen; and,  
 “ throwing herself back in her Chair,”  
 ‘ Oh Cousin!’ said she, ‘ I thought  
 ‘ myself more perfectly disengaged from  
 ‘ all Affections, even to the most wor-  
 ‘ thy Objects, on this Side the Grave,  
 ‘ that I now find I am; and that I  
 ‘ could leave those who were most dear  
 ‘ to me without Sorrow or Reluctance.  
 ‘ But I did not then fully know how  
 ‘ much is due to virtuous Friendship.  
 ‘ Even the near Prospect of a happy  
 ‘ Eternity cannot wholly draw off our

150 IDEAL TRIFLES.

• Attention from it, nor efface the  
• lovely Image of a Friend. As we  
• borrow our most exalted Ideas of  
• heavenly Happiness from what we  
• here experience of virtuous Friend-  
• ship; we know not how to consider  
• it as complete, when, to be put into  
• Possession of it, we must be separated,  
• for however short a Time, from any  
• Portion of that which seems to con-  
• stitute its very Essence and Perfec-  
• tion. No Wonder then, that, even  
• with the fairest Views of Futurity  
• before us, Affection looks back with  
• Regret on the dear Friends we must  
• leave behind, and cannot but feel the  
• Pangs of Separation.' "She then burst  
• into Tears; but surely Tears never  
" appeared



“ appeared so lovely ! After she had  
 “ wept for some Time, the Emotions  
 “ of Grief subsided into the most per-  
 “ fect Tranquility and Resignation. She  
 “ then took up her Pen and finished :  
 “ After which she untied the Ribband  
 “ from her Neck on which Damon’s  
 “ Picture hung on her Bosom ; and,  
 “ rising, took her own, and the Verses  
 “ which she mentions in her Letter,  
 “ from her Bureau.” “ These,” said she,  
 “ I will now part with to my Eudocia.  
 “ They will, I doubt not, be an accept-  
 “ able Memorial, while she tarries here  
 “ behind us, of her departed Friends ;  
 “ and I have no farther Occasion for  
 “ any of them. The Image of my Da-  
 “ mon, and of whatever relates to him,

' are too strongly painted on my Me-  
 ' mory to need any such external Helps;  
 ' and could only serve to excite such  
 ' Emotions as I had now better be  
 ' without.' " So saying she gave me the  
 " Miniatures and the Verses, and beg-  
 " ged I would carefully pack them up,  
 " together with her Letter, and send  
 " them to you. After this, quite ex-  
 " hausted, she again sat down in her  
 " easy Chair, and desired I would play  
 " some Hymns on the Harpsichord.  
 " Before I had finished one, she drop-  
 " ped fast asleep. Just at that Time,  
 " Sir Harry and the amiable Dr. D—,  
 " her Friend and Physician, came into  
 " the Room. Sir Harry stepped up to  
 " the Chair; and seeing her asleep, the  
 " Tears

“Tears started in his Eyes.” “*Asleep*  
 “*so soon!* said he; *but Sorrow minds no*  
 “*Seasons.*” “Their entering the Room  
 “awaked her. She bowed to them,  
 “and said she was glad to see them.  
 “As they were seating themselves, she  
 “begged Sir Harry to bring his Chair  
 “close to the Side of hers. She took  
 “hold of his Hand and pressed it to  
 “her Lips.” “Brother,” said she, “did you  
 “ever observe a Candle expiring in the  
 “Socket?” “The Allusion struck him too  
 “forcibly. He burst into Tears; spoke  
 “not one Word; kissed her Hand; and  
 “left the Room. The Doctor rose  
 “from his own Chair, and seated him-  
 “self in that which her Brother had  
 “quitted. He took her by the Hand,

“ and was going to speak; when she  
 “ prevented him, by asking what he  
 “ thought of dying.” ‘ For my Part,’  
 ‘ said she, ‘ I do not think it such a Bug-  
 ‘ bear as the World generally esteems  
 ‘ it. It is true, indeed, that if we  
 ‘ consider the Soul and Body, while  
 ‘ they are connected here, as two dear  
 ‘ Companions who have long shared in  
 ‘ each other’s Pains and Pleasures, we  
 ‘ cannot wonder that the Prospect of  
 ‘ an eternal Separation should be view-  
 ‘ ed with Horror and Reluctance. And  
 ‘ this is the Case with the Bulk of  
 ‘ Mankind. But it is far otherwise with  
 ‘ me, Doctor. My Soul and Body  
 ‘ have long been more like jarring Man  
 ‘ and Wife, of opposite Tempers and  
 ‘ Inclina-



IDEAL TRIFLES. 155

‘ Inclinations. I rejoice therefore to  
‘ find that the Power of Repulsion is  
‘ now taking Place between them; and  
‘ that Gravitation must soon cement  
‘ my Body to the Earth, and Attrac-  
‘ tion unite my Soul to the Powers  
‘ above.’ “It is easier for you to ima-  
“ gine, than for me to describe, the  
“ Effect which this Speech had both  
“ upon the Doctor and myself.

“ It is now very late, and I must  
“ conclude. I shall take every Oppor-  
“ tunity of writing to you, though I  
“ really wish you could come hither.  
“ Almira, I know, longs to see you;  
“ but takes Pains to suppress her De-  
“ fires. She is afraid lest the Trial

156 IDEAL TRIFLES.

“ should be too hard, not only for you,  
“ but for herself. I am sure the Family  
“ here stand in Need of your tender  
“ Sympathy and Care, to assist and sup-  
“ port them under the Weight of their  
“ approaching Affliction. I asked her if  
“ I should desire your Company : She  
“ answered,” ‘ If you can make a Bargain  
‘ with Eudocia beforehand not to look  
‘ upon my Death as an Evil, tell her  
‘ she may come.’ “ So now, my dear, if  
“ you have Philosophy enough to be-  
“ hold the fell Destroyer, hewing down  
“ the most beautiful Fabric of Morta-  
“ lity that ever was raised, without a  
“ Tear, come to us : But if not, stay  
“ where you are ; for we must have no-  
“ thing

IDEAL TRIFLES. 157

" thing here but Resignation and Com-  
" posure.

" Farewell,

" P. F——;

" P. S. Remember me in the most  
" respectful Manner to Hypatia, if she  
" is still with you."

It is impossible I should make any  
Bargain with Miss F——: But let the  
Consequence be what it will I must go  
to Almira. The next Letter you receive  
from me will most probably be dated  
from the once-pleasant Village of ——.

The

## 158 IDEAL TRIFLES.

The Verses already mentioned were written by Damon. They are no more than the Introduction to a Poem which he had planned on the Immortality of the Soul, with which he was prevented, by his untimely Death, from proceeding any farther. I will make Sally transcribe them for you. Adieu.

### A F R A G M E N T.

Arise, my Atticus, and leave this Scene  
Of mortal Things, this State of short Duration;  
On Contemplation's Wings, whose boundless Flight  
Nor Space, nor Time's short Limits can restrain,  
Together let us soar, aloof from Earth,  
In search of an *Hereafter*; an Existence  
Of more Perfection, in some happier World,  
When Death shall close this sublunary Scene.

Death,



## IDEAL TRIFLES: 159

Death, like a mighty Conqu'ror strides along  
O'er Heaps on Heaps his pow'rful Arm hath slain  
Without Distinction. None, ah! none escape  
The Terrors of his mighty Hand; but all  
Experience, soon or late, his awful Sway.  
Tyrants and Conquerors, whose Thirst for Pow'r,  
For wide Dominion o'er the Sons of Earth,  
Compels them, with such brutish, savage Fury,  
T' extend or to secure precarious Empire,  
With Racks, and Chains, and Death, a horrid  
Train,  
And Slaughter bath'd in Blood of Fellow-mortals,  
To rage around the Globe, unpeople Nations,  
And fill the World with Tears, and Groans, and  
Anguish;  
E'en these shall find their Greatness unavailing;  
Forc'd to relinquish their mistaken Bliss,  
And yield, reluctant, to a mightier Tyrant.

The scraping Miser soon must leave his Gold;  
Perhaps,—that galls him,—to a spendthrift Heir:

Yet

## 160 IDEAL TRIFLES.

Yet see yon grov'ling Wretch! How, studious, he  
 Collects the shining Dust his narrow Soul  
 Can ne'er enjoy! Short-sighted, erring Mortal,  
 Why that Solitude, that eager Haste  
 To grasp what one short Hour may take away;  
 And for a few revolving Years at most  
 Can'st thou possess? Yet thou, who art so thoughtful  
 When in Pursuit of Trifles, can'st forget  
 Things of such vast Importance! No, thou can'st not.  
 The irksome Thought will sometimes steal uncall'd,  
 And fiercely rankle in thy tortur'd Breast,  
 "That Death's the Lot of every human Being."  
 This, amidst all th' Uncertainties and Doubts  
 With which the human Mind is oft perplex'd,  
 Is certain Truth,—a Truth well known to all.

But, say, does here our short Existence end?  
 Does the Soul die? and are her active Powers  
 Extinguish'd in the grosser Body's Ruin?  
 Like a bright Taper does the Soul blaze forth  
 A Moment's Space, then languish, and expire

In

## IDEAL TRIFLES. 161

In curling Smoke, ne'er more to be rekindled?  
 Or, happier Lot! to some more perfect State,  
 Refin'd and purify'd, shall she arise,  
 Superior to Destruction?—Shall the Film  
 Obscure, that dimm'd her mortal Sight, fall off;  
 And all the Wonders of the Universe  
 Stand forth, discover their most secret Movements  
 To her capacious View? Shall she with Rapture  
 Fair Nature's universal Frame behold,  
 See endless Beings, Systems, in Gradation  
 Produc'd by boundless Wisdom, Power, and Good-  
 ness?  
 See every Spring of all their varied Actions;  
 And how they tend to universal Good?  
 Sustain th' uninterrupted Blaze of Light  
 Impetuous on her strong Optics rushing,  
 Her Optics unimpair'd, her Sight undazzled?  
 With such Perfection held to view; such Bliss  
 In certain Prospect, to reward his Toils  
 Who climbs unwearied up th' Ascent of Virtue,  
 Tho' oftentimes steep and rugged,—with what Joy;—

All

162 IDEAL TRIFLES.

All gloomy Thoughts, and all foreboding Fears,  
 All chilling Horrors, and all anxious Doubts,  
 And the sad Form of dread Annihilation  
 Indignant spurn'd from his exulting Breast,—  
 With what sweet rapturous Pleasure would he meet  
 The vulgar Bugbear! the vain Phantom Death!  
 His mighty Hopes, his noble Expectations,  
 Firm fix'd and center'd, in that perfect State  
 Of Wisdom unconfin'd, and mental Bliss.

O that some Angel, some benignant Spirit  
 Would guide my labouring Steps, would aid my  
 Flight,

While I attempt, in Reason's surest Path,  
 Or rising on fair Hope's more doubtful Pinion,  
 To cheer my Soul with the refreshing View  
 Of Life Eternal.—O thou mighty Power,  
 Whose potent Word produc'd the wond'rous, vast,  
 Stupendous System, which thy Wisdom plann'd,  
 In rich Benevolence and unbounded Goodness,  
 That Thou to Myriads of inferior Beings,

Each



## IDEAL TRIFLES. 163

Each Hour, each Moment of ne'er-ending Time,  
Might'st Life dispense, and Happiness bestow;  
Enlighten, if the Plan by which Thou govern'st  
Th' unnumber'd Systems of the Universe,  
And the Degree which in the Scale of Beings  
We of the human Race possess, admit  
Such Influence—enlighten Thou my Mind;  
Aid Thou my Reason in its arduous Search;  
Dispel the dark'ning Clouds that hover round it,  
And intercept the Soul-enlight'ning Rays  
Of Truth, bright Luminary, with which com-  
par'd

The Sun's Meridian Splendor is but Darkness.

O may she beam her Light around my Soul,

And show her—what 'tis Happiness to know.

\* \* \* \* \*  
\* \* \* \* \*

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LETTER

## LETTER XIX.

EUDOCIA TO HYPATIA.

I Arrived at this Place last Monday Morning about Eleven o'Clock.— How I got hither I hardly know.—My sorrowful Heart was too full to attend to any Thing but its own Reflections, which I found a melancholy Pleasure in indulging. In such a Temper of Mind, as my Road lay through Hales Owen, I felt an irresistible Inclination to visit once more the rural Seat of my late amiable Friend, the tender, plaintive Shenstone; and weep his Loss amidst those delightful Scenes which owed so much of their Beauty to his directing Hand,

Hand, and seemed ever to receive additional Charms from the magic Influence of his Presence and Conversation. But, alas! what a Change! The sweet Warbler of the Leafowes was gone. The neglected Shrubs and Flowers seemed to droop and languish; and the Trees seemed enviously to thrust forward their Branches, and spread them before the Views which he had opened, as if afraid lest their Beauties should alleviate the Sorrow which all ought to feel for his Absence. The Cascade had forgot to flow; and the weeping Fountain had ceased to weep, as if the Greatness of its Grief had drained the Sluices of its Tears. I truly sympathized with the neglected Inhabitants of  
I this

this once-enchancing Spot, and paid my  
 Tribute of Tears to the Memory of my  
 lamented Friend, their late Master and  
 Protector. “ Be not vain, O Man ;  
 “ for yet a little while, and the Place  
 “ which knows thee now shall know  
 “ thee no more ; and thou shalt be as  
 “ if thou hadst never been.”

I was now but a few Miles from ———.  
 To prepare myself in this Manner to  
 meet my poor Friend, was, you will  
 say, not very prudent. It may be so :  
 But it was as impossible for me to pass  
 through Hales Owen, without going to  
 gratify my Melancholy at the Leafowes,  
 as it would be to refrain from eating of  
 a plen-



a plentiful Entertainment when the Appetite is spurred on by Hunger.

But all this is nothing, Hypatia, compared with what I have suffered, and probably am to suffer. The nearer I approached to Almira, the more my Perturbation and Hurry of Spirits increased. Just as we came up to a private Gate which opens from the Shrubbery into the Road, honest old William happened to be leaning over it. I thought this a lucky Opportunity of arriving unnoticed at the House; and, as this was my favourite Part of the Garden, I hoped, by walking through a Spot which had so often delighted me, to calm the Hurry and Agitation of my  
Spirits.

Spirits. I therefore ordered the Chaise to stop, and alighted. William seemed glad to see me; but his Joy was insufficient to dispel an habitual Gloom, which long Sorrow had strongly printed on his Countenance. His silent Grief strangely affected me. I thought my full Heart would have burst. I was unable to utter a Syllable; and should certainly have dropped down, had not Sally, and the honest old Man been ready to support me. A Torrent of Tears at length relieved me. After having a little recovered myself, I walked forward hanging on Sally's Arm. Never did I approach my Almira's Habitation with such Reluctance and Heaviness of Heart. The beautiful Environs of the

House

House appeared to have lost all their Charms. Every Thing seemed to wear a gloomy Aspect. Arriving at length at the House, I was conducted into a Par-  
lour where sat Sir Harry, Brother to my Almira; and, allowing for the Difference of Sex, the direct Image of his Sister. He started up: " Bless me," said he, " Eudocia," and eagerly catching me in his Arms, " little did I think of seeing  
 " you here! This is Friendship indeed!  
 " But why am I surpris'd? It is as much  
 " of a piece with the Rest of your Cha-  
 " racter to visit the afflicted and those  
 " that mourn, as it would be with that  
 " of most People to fly from them  
 " to the more agreeable Haunts of  
 " Gaiety and Mirth." I wept plenti-

I

fully;

fully ; but was unable to reply. In the mean Time Lady H——, Almira's Grandmother, came into the Room, and embraced me with the most affectionate Tendernefs. I had not yet found my Tongue. I wished them to mention Almira ; for I was afraid to do it. At laft the old Lady faid, “ You had “ better, my dear, not fee my poor “ Child till after Dinner.” Juft then Mifs F—— came into the Room. She ran to me with open Arms, and expreffed uncommon Satisfaction in feeing me. “ Diffrefs like ours,” faid ſhe, “ needs all the Conſolations of Friend- “ ſhip. At ſuch a Seafon as this we “ feel it truly valuable.” And indeed, poor Girl, ſhe ſeemed to ſtand in  
Need



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Need of its Comforts. I was really shocked to see her. You remember seeing her at —, about two Years ago. She was then a healthful, blooming, sprightly Girl; and was by most People thought handsome. She is now grown quite pale and thin; and has a visible Melancholy on her Countenance, which plainly shews that the Afflictions of Almira, and the gloomy Prospect of her being soon torn away from her weeping Friends, have made too deep an Impression on her soft and feeling Heart. At last I ventured to ask after my poor Friend. “She had not,” Miss F— said, “been so well as she then was for several Weeks. She had for some Days ex-

"pected me, and was strongly prepos-  
 "sessed that she should see me that  
 "Day. And now," continued she, "I  
 "will run to make her happy with the  
 "good News of your Arrival." So  
 saying, she flew towards the Door; but  
 before she could open it, Sir Harry  
 hastily called out to her to stop. She  
 started, and seemed a good deal discom-  
 posed; and throwing herself into the  
 Chair that was nearest to her, "Oh!  
 "dear Sir Harry," said she, after fetch-  
 ing a deep Sigh, "you quite alarmed  
 "me. But you need not have been  
 "afraid that I was going to act rashly :  
 "No, no, I was well assured that there  
 "was no Danger of her being hurried  
 "by the Intelligence I was carrying to  
 "her.

“ her. I have just told you that she  
 “ expects to see Eudocia to Day. But  
 “ even if she did not, *she*, Sir Harry,  
 “ is so perfectly disengaged from all  
 “ worldly Affections, and feels herself  
 “ so little interested in any of the tri-  
 “ fling Concerns, about which we nar-  
 “ row-minded Mortals are forever ma-  
 “ king such a Bustle, that few Things  
 “ can surprize or discompose her.”—

Here she paused, looked dejected, and  
 sighed, and seemed lost for a while to  
 every Thing external. At length reco-  
 vering from her Reverie, she rose hastily,  
 and blushing left the Room, to hide the  
 unbidden Tears which were silently  
 stealing down her Cheek. “ That poor  
 “ Girl,” said Lady H——, “ distresses

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“ me much. Indeed, Hypatia, it would  
“ melt a Heart of Stone to see her.”

“ I evidently perceive,” said I, “ that  
“ she pays too close an Attention to her  
“ Cousin.”

“ I believe she does,” replied the  
amiable old Lady ; “ and it is out of  
“ our Power to prevent her. But I do  
“ not think that that is the sole Cause,  
“ nor perhaps even the principal one,  
“ of the great Alteration you see in  
“ her. Her Health has been gradually  
“ declining for upwards of two Years :  
“ There must therefore be some other  
“ Cause, besides her Attention to my  
“ poor Child, whose Afflictions did not  
“ com-



“commence till some Time after.”—  
Our Subject was, I believe, too affecting  
to Sir Harry. He rose from his Seat  
and left the Room.

By this Time I found my Spirits a  
good deal composed; and thought my-  
self in a better Condition than I had  
expected to be for sustaining the Shock  
of the approaching Interview.

It was not long before Sir Harry re-  
turned. I did not perceive him, as my  
Back was towards the Door. “Come,  
“Eudocia,” said he, “follow me to  
“my Sister’s Room.” This was a Call  
which I did not so soon expect. All  
my Courage at once forsook me. “I

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“ begged he would give me Time to  
“ recover myself. Reflection may com-  
“ pose me. Let me think a little, Sir  
“ Harry, before I venture into her  
“ Room.”

“ Think, Child! By thinking you  
“ cannot add one Cubit to your Sta-  
“ ture; nor can you give Strength to  
“ the shattered Nerves of your Friend.”

So saying, he led me towards her  
Room. Miss F——, who was waiting  
for us at the Door, had no sooner open-  
ed it, than, good Heaven! what did I  
see? A beautiful Woman shaken with  
Affliction, pale and emaciated, and lan-  
guishing on a Sick-bed?—No.—It is  
true,

true, I saw not the sparkling Eyes, and blooming Cheeks, which a few Months ago adorned the finest Set of Features I ever beheld; but, oh Hy-  
patia! I saw the loveliest Woman that ever Devotion and Resignation had painted, sitting in an easy Chair, with a Calmness and Serenity in her Countenance, which seemed to proclaim her superior to every Thing in this World. I ran to her: She rose from her Seat. I held her in my Arms: She hung upon my Neck, she kissed my Cheek. I wept: She wiped away my Tears. I have been a Prodigal, said she, of my Tears; and have not now left even a tender friendly Tear for my Eudocia.

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After a short Silence, “ I was in  
“ Hopes,” added she, “ that your sound  
“ Understanding, your Religion, would  
“ have enabled you to behold with Forti-  
“ tude the Dissolution of this poor totter-  
“ ing Fabrick; the Tenant of which has a  
“ happier Dwelling in View,” ‘ a House  
‘ not made with Hands, but eternal in  
‘ the Heavens.’ “ Had you such Pro-  
“ spects for me, my Friend, as I have  
“ for myself, you would rejoice.”

“ I do indeed rejoice,” said I, “ to find  
“ you in so happy a State of Mind; and  
“ am not without the most pleasing Pro-  
“ spect of your eternal Welfare: But it is  
“ somewhat clouded, I must confess, with  
“ the



"the gloomy Expectation of shortly  
"losing you for ever."

"Not *for ever*, Eudocia : You, I am  
"well assured, will so conduct your little  
"Bark on the tempestuous Ocean of this  
"Life, as to arrive safely at the Port  
"of Happiness in the next: And though  
"my Prospect of Land is nearer, yours,  
"I trust, is not less sure."

This, and much more which flowed  
from the Lips of this divine Woman,  
could not fail of both affecting and  
rousing me. Good God! thought I,  
thou art no Loser: For the Beauty and  
Strength which is taken from the Body,  
is given to thy Mind. For there indeed,

Hypatia, she seems to have arrived at the utmost Boundaries of Perfection attainable in this World.

How selfish is the human Heart ! I cannot think of this dear Woman without envying her happy Lot. What would I give to be in the like Situation ! She has escaped Shipwreck in the tempestuous Ocean of Life ; is arrived into a safe Harbour ; and will shortly set her Foot upon the promised Land of Happiness : Whereas my little Bark may yet be overwhelmed by a Tempest, split upon a Rock, or devoured by a Quick-sand.

EUDOCIA.

LETTER

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LETTER XX.

Miss F—— to HYPATIA,

DEAR HYPATIA,

**T**HOUGH my personal Knowledge of you is slight, yet I have been made so perfectly acquainted with your Character, and so intimate with all your Concerns, by Eudocia and my Cousin, that I seem to have been your Bosom-friend for many Years; and stand in no Need of an Injunction from Eudocia to write to you without Ceremony or Reserve.

I shall

I shall therefore consider you as an old familiar Acquaintance, and proceed, without farther Preface, to set down, just as they shall offer themselves to my Recollection, such of our domestick Occurrences as shall seem likely to be agreeable to you.

It is impossible to give you a just Idea of the Manner in which we pass our Time here. Eudocia's Presence has worked a surprising Change in the whole Family. Affliction never wore a less dismal Aspect than ours has done since that amiable Woman came among us. She has not indeed been able altogether to dispel the Gloom which hung over us; for that were impossible by any  
 Thing



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Thing less than the Restoration of Almira's Health; but she has so broken and dispersed it by the Magic of her Conversation and Deportment, as to make Way for a larger Portion of the warm and enlivening Rays of Consolation than we have hitherto been cheered with since the Commencement of our Afflictions.

In short, the Relief which we have now experienced for more than a Fort-night, for so long it is since Eudocia's Arrival, has been so great, that we are willing to attribute it to an Amendment in Almira's Health; especially as she has appeared stronger and more cheerful since that Time; and are not, I fear,

fear, sufficiently aware that the chief Amendment is in ourselves.

The Conversations which pass between Eudocia, my Cousin, and Sir Harry, are highly interesting and instructing. But before I give you any of the Particulars of them, it will be proper to make you better acquainted with Almira's Brother, as Eudocia tells me you have never seen him; and as he is but lately returned from his Travels, after an Absence of three Years, greatly improved, though always accomplished, in Understanding, Manners, and Person.

Imagine

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Imagine then a Youth about Twenty-four, with the most perfect Harmony of Features, the purple Light of Youth blooming in his Face, his radiant blue Eyes softened with all the mellow Lustre of the Black. Imagine a most affable Sweetness of Address, and a Perfection of Politeness which is rarely to be met with ; and when you have done all this, you will have a slight Glimpse, and but a slight one of Sir Harry H——.

His Dispositions are amiable, his Understanding strong and clear ; he has an Ardor and Tenderness in his Friendship, and a Quickness and Warmth in his Expressions, which are the Marks of lively Feelings, and a susceptible Heart.

There

There is something in his Conversation which I never met with in that of any Gentleman before. After having made himself well acquainted with his native Country, he took a deliberate Tour through France, Italy, and a considerable Part of Germany; and his fine Understanding has made a proper Use of these Advantages. Hence you may easily conceive that his Conversation is both delightful and instructing. I believe he is much pleased with Eudocia's Company, and she with his. Yesterday Morning when he came into his Sister's Room to ask how she had passed the Night; after having satisfied his Enquiries concerning her Health: "But, pray  
 "Brother," said she, "how happens it  
 "that



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“ that I have not seen Eudocia this  
“ Morning ?”

“ You will excuse me, Brother, if I  
“ think it necessary to caution you not  
“ to take up so much of her Time.  
“ You must alter your Conduct, or you  
“ will certainly injure her Health. Her  
“ Mind is continually on the Stretch.  
“ Wholly taken up with your Conver-  
“ sation, she is negligent of proper Re-  
“ freshments ; particularly of those very  
“ important ones, fresh Air, Exercise,  
“ and Sleep. You make her Days too  
“ long, and her Nights too short : And  
“ yet with all that Length of Day, she  
“ seldom walks farther than from my  
“ Room to the Dining-Room. If you  
“ must

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“ must be so much together, let some  
“ Part of the Time be dedicated to  
“ Health as well as to Conversation :  
“ To which, indeed, riding a few Miles  
“ every Day about the Country, or  
“ walking an Hour or two in the Gar-  
“ den, would rather be a Help than an  
“ Impediment.”

“ I acknowledge, my dear Sister,”  
answered he, “ that we have been very  
“ faulty ; but Eudocia herself is chiefly  
“ to blame ; were she less agreeable, I  
“ should not steal so much of her Com-  
“ pany. I really never met with so  
“ young a Lady who could think so  
“ well upon every Subject, and expres-  
“ her

“ her Thoughts with so much Propriety  
“ and Elegance.”

My Cousin seemed pleased to hear her Brother's Sentiments of Eudocia ; and, after a Moment's Pause, as if weighing something doubtful in her Mind, assumed a satisfied and determined Air. She seemed going to utter something of serious Importance, when Eudocia entering the Room obliged her to divert the Conversation to some other Subject.

But it is Time to give you some Account of my Cousin's Health. As to my own Opinion, I think she every Day grows worse and worse. She complains of no Pain ; but of much Weariness

ness and Sinking; and is apt to be out of Breath upon the least Motion. Her Spirits, indeed, have been considerably better since Eudocia came; a Circumstance which deceives every one of the Family, but myself, with vain Hopes that she will get the better of her Disorder: But none of them, Hypatia, have been so much Witnesses, as I have been, of the frequent Spitting of Blood; of the Want of Rest, occasioned by a Cough which comes on at Night soon after she lies down in Bed, and which, though seldom violent, is often so incessant as hardly to allow her a Moment's Rest till towards Morning; or of the profuse Sweats which stream from every Pore as soon as she begins to sleep;



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all which are hourly consuming her tender Frame ; but which she takes every Precaution to conceal from every one but from me and her Maid.

I asked the Doctor this Morning, if he thought it was possible that she might recover.

He answered, “ that he was afraid  
“ it was not.”

I mentioned her better Spirits.

“ It is that flattering Circumstance,”  
said he, “ that deceives her Friends.  
“ Her Spirits will continue, if I mistake  
“ not, to the last ; when she will most  
“ probably

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“probably calmly die away without a  
“ Struggle or a Pang. For she wastes  
“ by so gentle a Decay, that if she be  
“ not as suddenly carried off by a Spit-  
“ ting of Blood from a Rupture of  
“ some large Blood-vessel in the Lungs,  
“ the Props of Life will gradually moul-  
“ der away, till at length, being no  
“ longer able to support the Fabric,  
“ they will suddenly give Way, and it  
“ will rush at once to Diffolution.”

Though I never flattered myself that  
she would recover, yet I must own that  
I could hardly stand the Shock of so  
plain a Declaration, which coming from  
a Person of the Doctor's acknowledged  
Abilities, and Judgment in his Pro-  
fession,

feſſion, ſeemed, like the Declaration of Fate, to deprive me at once of every Ray of Hope; of which the Conſciouſneſs of my own total Ignorance of medical Matters, had hitherto, notwithſtanding the Gloomineſs of my Views, left me ſome ſmall Glimmering.

Yeſterday Morning ſhe rode out a little Way in the Chariot. It was her own Propoſal. Sir Harry and Eudocia went with her: She ſat between them, that they might ſerve as a Support to her, and prevent her from feeling any Inconvenience from the Motion of the Carriage. On their Return ſhe told us, that ſhe found herſelf much better for the Ride. They were not out above

K

Half

Half an Hour. Soon after arrived Sir William S—— and his Lady, on a Visit which they regularly make here every Summer. They are a most amiable Couple; and are much beloved by the whole Family, more on Account of the Goodness of their Hearts, than the near Relation which they bear to it; for Lady S—— is Almira's Aunt. They were overjoyed to find that their Neice was not only out of Bed, but had been able to take an Airing: For they were afraid, from the last Account which they had received of her, that she was too weak to leave her Bed. The Honourable Mr. V——, who formerly paid his Addresses to Almira, was with them; a very worthy, sober, good-



good-natured young Gentleman, to whose Family and Fortune no Lady could reasonably object; but not remarkable for Genius, or for any considerable Abilities. The Goodness, however, of his Heart would have pleaded strongly in his Favour, had not she been at that Time already engaged to her Damon.

He seemed quite shocked to see her in so weak a State; and, to apologize for what he thought an unseasonable Visit, told her, “ that Sir William and his  
“ Lady had insisted on bringing him  
“ with them.”

“ I beg, Sir,” said Almira, “ you  
“ will make no Apology. In conferring

"a Favour there is Occasion for none.

"We are all glad to see you."

Just then she perceived a Tickling in her Breast and Throat, which she knew to be the Forerunner of a Spitting of Blood; and therefore, under Pretence of resting herself after her Ride, retired with Eudocia and myself to her own Room, leaving Sir Harry and the old Lady with the Company; but promised to return and dine with them.

She had no sooner reached her own Room than a Fit of Coughing, which she had with the utmost Difficulty suppressed till she got thither, seized her, and did not cease till it had brought up  
several

several Ounces of Blood. She then laid herself down on the Bed, and soon dropped into a sweet Sleep, in which she continued about Half an Hour. When she waked she felt herself greatly refreshed. At length Word being brought that Dinner was ready, we returned into the Dining-Room. Almira sat down at the Table with the Rest of the Company, and attempted to eat: But soon finding the Smell of the Meat too much for her, she retired to a Window at the farthest Part of the Room; promising to resume her Seat as soon as the Cloth should be taken away. Eudocia soon followed her. They had not long been seated together before I observed them engaged in very earnest Conversation.

What were the Particulars of it I cannot tell; as they were at too great a Distance, and spoke too low to be distinctly heard amidst the much nearer and louder Conversation of the Table. But I caught several Words from them both, which indicated their Subject to be serious and important; such as, from Almira, “ the great Benefit of Affliction—Comfort of Resignation—Peace of Mind—joyful Death—Unsatisfactoriness and Uncertainty of the Enjoyments of this Life—unspeakable and never-failing Happiness of the Good and Virtuous in that Eternal State to which we are all hastening,”—And from Eudocia, who several Times shed Tears, and seemed much affected,



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fect, “ the solid Advantages of virtuous Friendship—severe and irreparable Loss of dear Companions—heavy Afflictions, which human Weakness must feel the Weight of, though Religion may enable us to bear up under them.”

The Cloth being taken away, they resumed their Places at Table. My Cousin eat some Fruit, drank a Glass or two of very small Wine and Water, conversed chearfully, and appeared in remarkable good Spirits. Lady H—— was overjoyed to see her so well. Sir Harry told her, “ that he was not without Hopes that she might yet be restored to Health, if she would but

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“ exert herself in making use of proper  
“ Means for that Purpose ; and not su-  
“ pinely give up a Life, which was va-  
“ luable in itself, and of much Impor-  
“ tance to all her Friends :” And con-  
cluded with telling her, “ that much,  
“ he believed, was in her own Power.”

Every one joined with him in exhort-  
ing her to use every probable Means of  
preserving a Life in which all who were  
connected with her were so deeply in-  
terested : Nor did any one fail to bestow  
the warmest Recommendations on some  
approved Means for that Purpose. She  
heard them with Patience. At Length,  
with a most amiable Serenity of Counte-  
nance, and inexpressible Dignity, which  
seemed

seemed to strike every one present with the profoundest Awe and Veneration, she spoke as follows :

“ Lament not, my amiable Friends,  
 “ that I am likely to be snatched so early  
 “ from you, and from the World. I  
 “ have lived long enough to see the Im-  
 “ perfection and Instability of all earthly  
 “ Happiness. I have lived to see the  
 “ dearest and best of Parents both laid  
 “ in the Grave; as well as many of  
 “ my most intimate Companions and  
 “ Friends : But Youth and Health soon  
 “ got the better of these Afflictions.  
 “ When a few more Years had matured  
 “ my Judgment, I suffered a very amia-  
 “ ble Man to engage my Affection.

“ We marked out a happy Life toge-  
 “ ther. We promised ourselves endless  
 “ Felicity. But, alas! in the Twink-  
 “ ling of an Eye, this Companion of  
 “ my Soul was pushed off the slippery  
 “ Verge of Life, and plunged into  
 “ Eternity : And with him perished all  
 “ my Prospects and Schemes of Hap-  
 “ piness in this World.”

Here an involuntary Sigh escaped  
 her ; a Stream of Tears trickled down  
 her lovely Cheeks ; and she seemed  
 much affected ; but, soon recovering  
 herself, she wiped away the Tears, and  
 thus proceeded :

“ Never-



“ Nevertheless, I thank you, my dear  
 “ Friends, for your tender and well-  
 “ meaning Solicitude about my Health.  
 “ But, alas! you know not what you  
 “ wish me, when you wish me to be  
 “ again possessed of it. Health is, in  
 “ its own Nature, a Blessing; yet often  
 “ proves a Misfortune, by dazzling the  
 “ Eye of Reason, lulling the suspi-  
 “ cious Caution of Prudence, and stag-  
 “ gering the Resolution of Virtue, in  
 “ proportion as it increases the Impe-  
 “ tuosity of our Passions, and our Relish  
 “ for present and sensual Enjoyments.  
 “ For we are all, by the instinctive Im-  
 “ pulse of Nature, eager in the Pursuit  
 “ of Happiness. Present Objects affect  
 “ us strongly; remote ones operate but

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“ weakly upon us, and their Influence  
“ decreases in Proportion to their Re-  
“ moteness. Health gives a delusive  
“ Beauty and the most attractive Al-  
“ lurement to present Objects and Ap-  
“ petites, and heightens the Relish of  
“ present Enjoyments. Reason, indeed,  
“ and Religion teach us to look forward  
“ to a future and eternal State for that  
“ true and lasting Happiness which we  
“ are all incessantly sighing for and  
“ thirsting after; but which will ever  
“ elude our Research, and disappoint  
“ our most sanguine Hopes, while we  
“ seek for it, where it is not to be  
“ found, in the good Things and En-  
“ joyments of this World; of all which  
“ the Pleasures of Sense, though most  
“ univer-

“ universally captivating, however re-  
“ fined, and however innocent, are  
“ much the lowest and least perma-  
“ nent: But we are so perpetually sur-  
“ rounded and beset by them, they are  
“ so continually crowding in, and ob-  
“ truding themselves upon us on every  
“ Side, and we are so strongly tempted  
“ when in Health to yield to their Im-  
“ portunity, that it is no Wonder that  
“ the gentle Admonitions of Reason  
“ and Religion are scarcely heard, and  
“ but little attended to, amidst the  
“ louder and more clamorous Solicita-  
“ tions of the Senses; till Sickness or  
“ Disappointment strip them of their  
“ Charms, and convince us that we  
“ have hitherto placed too much of our  
“ Affection

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“ Affection upon unworthy Objects.

“ And happy are they who are so convinced.

“ I have been blessed with Friends,  
“ Health, and Prosperity ; I have experienced every Pleasure which they  
“ could bestow ; and have thought myself completely happy in the Enchantment which they spread around me.  
“ But God, in Mercy, hath been pleased  
“ by a severe, but perhaps necessary Dispensation of his Providence, to break  
“ the Charm. I was not then sensible  
“ of the Blessing. My weak Understanding considered it as a cruel Stroke  
“ of Fate, which had at once severed  
“ me from every Hope of Happiness.

“ I



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“ I repined. I could not submit to the  
“ Blow. I wished for Death. The fu-  
“ ture Welfare of my Soul had no  
“ Share in my Thoughts: They were  
“ wholly possessed by my present Afflic-  
“ tion; the Anguish of which had so  
“ firmly taken hold of my Mind, that  
“ it quite overpowered my Under-  
“ standing; of which, as you all know,  
“ I was almost totally deprived for a  
“ considerable Time. But Heaven bore  
“ with my Weakness; restored me to  
“ my Reason; gave me Time to see my  
“ Error and repent. And now all my  
“ Hopes and Views are directed to an-  
“ other and better World; to which  
“ this Life, at the best, is but a State  
“ of Preparation; where I hope, thro’  
“ divine

“divine Favour, securely to enjoy, thro’  
 “all Eternity, that Peace and Happi-  
 “ness which this World cannot give.”

Here, Hypatia, she paused for a few Minutes. Her Heart was too full for Utterance. Not a Soul in the Room offered to break the awful Silence. Every Eye was directed to my divine Cousin; who, having thrown herself back in her Chair, and covered her Face with a Handkerchief which she held in her Hand, seemed lost in an Ecstasy of Gratitude and Devotion. At length, uncovering her Face, raising herself forward, and resting her left Arm upon the Elbow of the Chair, with ineffable Sweetness and

and Resignation in her Countenance, she proceeded :

“ I am now arrived at that happy  
 “ State of Mind, that I lightly esteem  
 “ the Pleasures of this World, and can  
 “ be but little affected by any of its  
 “ Concerns. Nor ought you to think  
 “ this the Effect of Chagrin, a sudden  
 “ forward Rejection of the numberless  
 “ other Blessings that are offered me,  
 “ because I was not permitted to enjoy  
 “ those on which I had accidentally  
 “ placed my Affection. Believe it, my  
 “ Friends, to be the Result of the most  
 “ serious Deliberation : Believe it to be  
 “ the Result of a rational and well-in-  
 “ formed Judgment, victorious over ob-  
 “ stinate

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“ stinate Prepossession, and rebellious  
“ Inclinations. But I am indebted to  
“ Affliction and Sicknes; or, to speak  
“ more properly, to the gracious Au-  
“ thor of them, who *in his Anger re-*  
“ *membereth Mercy*, for the happy Change.  
“ When Health and Prosperity were  
“ hurrying me on through the fairy  
“ Land of present Enjoyment, where  
“ every Scene appeared gay and lovely,  
“ and every Thing about me was admi-  
“ nistering to my Delight; in an Instant  
“ Adversity overtook me, and Sicknes  
“ followed close at her Heels. At once  
“ my former Conductors disappeared,  
“ and with them the whole Illusion va-  
“ nished; and in its Stead a dismal  
“ dreary Waste presented itself, the  
“ Horror



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“ Horror of which could be exceeded  
“ only by the Deformity of my new  
“ Companions. Familiarity, however,  
“ at length greatly diminished the ap-  
“ parent Dreariness of the one, and  
“ Loathsomeness of the other: And I  
“ soon found that my new Associates,  
“ though of a more austere and forbid-  
“ ding Aspect, had more real Kindness  
“ [for me], and were better disposed to  
“ promote my true Interest, than the  
“ gay Companions who had lately de-  
“ serted me: And to make amends for  
“ the Want of Beauty and Convenience  
“ in the Wilderness through which I  
“ was passing, they pointed out a bright  
“ and glittering Spot, on the Summit  
“ of a high and towering Hill, which  
“ seemed

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“ seemed almost to lose itself in the  
“ Clouds, at the utmost Verge of the  
“ Horizon.

“ This, they told me, was indeed at  
“ a very great Distance, the Way to it  
“ rough and difficult, and the Ascent  
“ steep and craggy: But the Beauties  
“ and Accommodations of the Place  
“ were infinitely superior to those of  
“ the enchanted Scenes which had lately  
“ vanished at their Approach; and  
“ which had owed all their Beauty, and  
“ even their very Existence, to the ma-  
“ gick Influence of Health and Pro-  
“ sperity. That it was illuminated with  
“ a perpetual Sunshine, and neither  
“ overcast with Clouds, or vexed with  
“ Storms.

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“ Storms. That there I might dwell  
“ forever in an uninterrupted Course of  
“ the most exquisite and permanent En-  
“ joyments, without Danger of Satiety  
“ or Disappointment. That, in short,  
“ if I would venture resolutely on, in  
“ Defiance of every Obstacle, I should  
“ be abundantly recompensed for the  
“ very trifling Loss which I had sustain-  
“ ed; and amply rewarded for every  
“ Difficulty which I should overcome.

“ In plain Terms, Sickness and Af-  
“ fliction have taught me to think, with  
“ the wise King Solomon, that there is  
“ nothing lasting and substantial in the  
“ Enjoyments of this World: That  
“ bright Prospects of Futurity alone  
“ can

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“ can enliven and give a true Relish to  
“ them ; without which all before us is  
“ but a gloomy Desert, and every Thing  
“ under the Sun but Vanity and Vexa-  
“ tion of Spirit.

“ Why then, my Friends, when I am  
“ just entering into that happy Country,  
“ where this Corruptible shall put on  
“ Incorruption, and this Mortal shall  
“ put on Immortality, where there shall  
“ be no more Sin, and all Sorrow shall  
“ be at an End, should you wish to de-  
“ tain me in these transitory Regions of  
“ Imperfection and Sorrow. Could my  
“ Health be restored, as I firmly believe  
“ it cannot, and should I even be con-  
“ tinued among you for a Length of  
“ Years,



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“ Years, yet you might be greatly dis-  
“ appointed in the Happiness you seem  
“ to promise yourselves from such an  
“ Event; and should it even prove ad-  
“ equate to your most sanguine Expec-  
“ tations, yet you cannot, my Friends,  
“ be so selfish, when you weigh the  
“ Matter seriously, as to suffer so incon-  
“ siderable a Portion of your own Hap-  
“ piness, as that which you might de-  
“ rive from my Continuance among  
“ you, to have any Weight with you,  
“ when put into Competition with the  
“ Satisfaction you must feel in the Con-  
“ sideration that I am secure in the Pos-  
“ session of eternal Felicity; from which  
“ such an Event would at least detain  
“ me for a Time; and might, perhaps,  
“ so

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“ so frail is human Virtue, seclude me  
“ for ever.

“ But though I look forward with  
“ Pleasure on my approaching Disso-  
“ lution, as the most desirable Event  
“ which can befall me, yet think not,  
“ my dear Friends, that I have ac-  
“ quired this happy Temper of Mind,  
“ without feeling the severest Pangs  
“ at the Thought of being torn from  
“ you. The last and strongest Obsta-  
“ cles which a virtuous Mind has to  
“ overcome in reconciling itself to the  
“ Leaving of this World, are those  
“ which arise from the Attachments of  
“ Friendship. We cannot leave those  
“ who are dear to us, even for the  
“ Enjoy-

“Enjoyment of endless Happiness, without a reluctant Struggle at Separation.”

She could proceed no farther. The Fatigue of Speaking so long, together with the various Emotions of Grief, Joy, Gratitude, Devotion and Resignation, which she felt at the several Periods of so interesting a Discourse; but especially the affectionate Tenderness which agitated her at the Conclusion, were too much for her weak and delicate Frame. She fell back in her Chair, sunk down, and fainted away.

All were greatly alarmed, and all severely blamed themselves for suffering

L

her

her to exhaust her Strength by speaking so long. Yet how was it possible that they should have done otherwise? Every ones Attention was too powerfully attracted, and every Heart too much interested and engaged by her pathetic and divine Discourse, to reflect on the Mischief which it might occasion to the lovely Speaker.

Her dissipated Spirits were soon recalled by the Use of such Means as are commonly at Hand, and generally employed on such Occasions. As soon as she was able, she was conveyed into her own Room; where she laid herself down upon the Bed to recover by Rest her exhausted Strength. She dropped asleep  
imme-



immediately; and in the Space of about an Hour and a Half awoke considerably refreshed. But she had not been long awake, when her Spitting of Blood returned with Violence, and she lost a much greater Quantity than in the Morning. This weakened her greatly. Eudocia continued with her all Night. She was restless, and slept but little; but enjoyed a most happy Tranquility of Mind. She agreed with Eudocia to avoid Talking; as they were both sensible that her present Relapse was in a great Measure occasioned by having over-exerted herself in that Respect on the preceding Day.

In

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In the Morning she was much better than could be expected after having lost so much Blood, and slept so little; which was probably owing to the Tranquility of her Mind, and the Care which she took to avoid Conversation though she lay so long awake. All her Friends rejoiced at seeing her so well recovered; and seemed still to retain Hopes, that by proper and diligent Care she might again be restored to Health. But when we were alone, Eudocia, who is the only Person besides myself, the Doctor, and her Maid Betty, that knows the true State of her Illness, told me, that she was convinced, from what she saw of her last Night, that there was but little Ground for Hope. “Alas,” said she,

she, " while her Friends are flattering  
 " themselves with the vain Imagination  
 " that it is possible to re-establish her  
 " Health, she, divine Creature, is losing  
 " no Time, but chearfully posting on  
 " to her eternal Home."

Dr. D—— has this Morning prevailed  
 with her, to allow him, for the Satisfaction  
 of her Friends, to consult with  
 some other Physician. She has fixed  
 upon Dr. W——, who attended her  
 when she lay ill of a Fever, about three  
 Years ago, at Sir William M——'s.  
 The Messenger has been gone about two  
 Hours. We expect the Doctor to-mor-  
 row Morning. I shall write to you  
 again very soon: For Eudocia is too

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much taken up with the dear departing Saint to spare Time for Writing.

If you do not meet with so able, you will at least meet with a diligent Correspondent in your affectionate, though almost unknown Friend,

M. F—;

LETTER



LETTER XXI.

EUDOCIA to HYPATIA.

**N**CESSITY, and not Choice, hath  
at Length furnished me with Lei-  
sure to write to my Hypatia.

I shall not pretend to give you any  
regular Narrative of what passes here.  
You must look for that from Miss F—,  
whom I have commissioned to supply  
my Place, by writing to you as often as  
she can, and making you acquainted  
with whatever is most interesting in the  
Transactions of this amiable, sorrowing  
Family.

In *my* Letters you must expect to meet with little else but the present Effusions of a Heart which is apt to feel, and which has at present much Scope for the tenderest Feelings; or detached Accounts of such Things as shall appear to me to be particularly interesting, and worthy of Attention.

Miss F—— has told you, that Dr. W—— was sent for. He arrived, as was expected, the next Morning. The Consultation was soon over, and put an End to the small remaining Hopes of those who had hitherto retained any of my dear Almira's Recovery. I have watched by the divine Creature for more than a Week, without once quit-  
ting

ting her. What Sleep I have had has been on a Couch in the Room. But I have, by her own Desire, been forced from her this Evening; and am not to be permitted to re-enter her Room, unless she should happen to be worse, till to-morrow Morning at Nine o'Clock. I could not however be satisfied to leave her till she promised to send for me immediately if she should find her Disorder increase. But they might have spared, Hypatia, their too-cruel Kindness. I find but too little Inclination to sleep. My Mind has too much Scope for its Activity on the present *momentous*, I can hardly say with Justice, *sorrowful* Occasion, to admit of an Indulgence of which I never was remarkably fond. Nor do

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I feel the Want of it. I never required, you know, much Sleep. However, as it is my dear dying Friend's Request, I will endeavour to court Sleep; which I cannot, I think, better do, than by restraining the too-eager and diffusive Excursions of the active Fancy, and warm Affections, within as narrow Limits as I am able. For this Purpose I shall confine myself chiefly, in what I now write, to the humble Task of a Transcriber.

Almira frequently employs me in looking over her Letters and Papers, and reading them to her. Such as she chuses should be preserved are carefully wrapped up and laid by; and the rest we burn. She has presented me with the  
greatest



greatest Part of them; out of which I may perhaps hereafter send you Copies of others; at present I shall transcribe a Prayer, or Soliloquy, which she composed soon after the Return of her Reason, when she was become sensible how much her late Sufferings had been exaggerated, and her eternal Welfare endangered, by mistaken Notions and Pursuits of Happiness.

“ Infinite God, though a stupendous  
 “ and incomprehensible Being, yet do I  
 “ believe that *thou art*; and that thou  
 “ *art a Rewarder* of them that diligently  
 “ *seek Thee*, acting according to the  
 “ Laws which thy eternal Reason hath  
 “ prescribed to their Natures. That

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" thou *art* I believe, because I find such  
 " Beings existing, as could neither *give*  
 " *Existence* to themselves, nor *receive it*,  
 " originally, from any Thing less than  
 " an all-powerful, all-wise, perfectly  
 " good, self-moving, and eternal Cause.

" And I believe that thou wilt *make*  
 " *as happy*, as is consistent with their  
 " Natures, all those who *act* agreeably  
 " *thereto*; because I cannot conceive  
 " that the wisest of Beings could create  
 " *Existence* for *no End at all*. But if  
 " Man was created for any End, it *must*  
 " *be for Happiness*. For neither can I  
 " believe that the *kindest and best* of Be-  
 " ings would make Creatures capable  
 " of enjoying, and implant in their Na-  
 " tures

“ tures an ardent Desire of Happiness,  
 “ which, though ever placed before  
 “ their longing Eyes, ever flattering  
 “ their deluded Expectations, he never  
 “ intended they should possess.

“ But though, in the Creation of  
 “ Man, I believe thou didst *intend*, and,  
 “ if it be allowable so to speak, didst  
 “ *wish* his Happiness; yet didst thou  
 “ make it depend upon his own Choice  
 “ whether he should be so or not. Thou  
 “ didst put it into his own Power to  
 “ arrive safe at the Haven of Bliss; or  
 “ to be driven off and tossed on the  
 “ wide and boundless Ocean of Unhap-  
 “ piness; accordingly as he should steer,  
 “ with

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“ with unremitted Affiduity, the Course  
“ pointed out by Reason, which thou  
“ madest the Polar-star to direct him;  
“ or should weakly and imprudently  
“ commit himself to the boisterous and  
“ inconstant Winds of Passion, which  
“ blow to every Point but that towards  
“ which he ought to steer.

“ It is my most earnest Desire, O best  
“ of Beings, to have my Eyes, in this  
“ Voyage of Life, constantly looking  
“ to the guiding Star of Reason: And  
“ as it is possible that the friendly Light  
“ of this bright-shining Luminary may  
“ be hidden or obscured, by the thick  
“ Clouds of Prejudice and false Opi-  
“ nion,



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“ nion, humbly presuming on thy infi-  
“ nite Goodness and Benevolence, I  
“ pray that whenever such Clouds and  
“ Mists shall arise, and intercept it,  
“ thou wilt kindly disperse them; and  
“ not suffer me long to wander without  
“ that Guide in View.

“ I believe, indeed, that thy Good-  
“ ness is ever ready to help, and stands  
“ not in Need of Entreaties: Nay, per-  
“ haps, the Prayers which so impru-  
“ dent and short-sighted a Creature as  
“ Man, or which even the noblest and  
“ most perfect of created Existencies  
“ can address to thee, who, as thou art  
“ the *best*, so art thou the *wisest* of Be-  
“ ings;

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" ings; and whose *Wisdom knows*, as  
 " well as *Goodness wills*, what is pro-  
 " perest, and will be most conducive to  
 " the Felicity of all thy Creatures, may  
 " not only be superfluous, but often  
 " erroneous and improper. Yet, con-  
 " scious of the Rectitude of my De-  
 " sires, do I venture to utter them be-  
 " fore thee; well knowing that thou  
 " canst not be displeased at the Impor-  
 " tunity of a Being who wishes to be  
 " directed by the unobscured Light of  
 " thy own best-beloved Reason; and  
 " trusting that the same infinite Know-  
 " ledge, and unsparing Goodness, which  
 " render my Petitions unnecessary and  
 " useless, will induce thee to acquit of  
 " Pre-

"Presumption what thou knowest to  
 "be, if improper, but the *well-meaning*  
 "Error of an ignorant Creature."

You see, by the enlarged and rational  
 Sentiments contained in this Prayer, that  
 the Devotion of my dear dying Friend  
 is not of the blind and enthusiastic, but  
 of the most enlightened and sober Kind.  
 Though born in Affliction, it is not the  
 Offspring of Chagrin and Disappoint-  
 ment; but of a good Heart, and sound  
 Judgment: And soon enabled her to  
 overcome the Afflictions which had  
 made her acquainted with it.

BUT I shall not anticipate your own  
 Reflections by any more of mine. It is  
 late,

late, and I will retire to rest. When I shall write to you again is very uncertain. But whether you hear from me, or not, you may be assured that you are never long out of the Thoughts of

Your

EUDOCIA.

LETTER



## LETTER XXII.

Miss F—— to HYPATIA.

Sunday Night.

**S**O now, Hypatia, all is at an End. The Beatification of my divine Cousin commenced this Morning about Four o'Clock. You can form but a very imperfect Idea of Yesterday, by any Description of it which I can give you. How Eudocia was supported, or by what inspired, I cannot pretend to say; but the Whole of her Behaviour was amazingly great. She has not been a Moment absent from her dying Friend for several

several Days and Nights. When I went into Almira's Room yesterday Morning, I was surprized to see her sitting up in Bed, supported by Pillows; for though she was obliged frequently to sit up in that Manner, when she was able, for fear of Suffocation; yet as I had left her too weak to sit up, however supported, the preceding Evening, and knew that she had been rather delirious and slightly convulsed for the greatest Part of the Night, so that it was hardly thought she could live till Morning, I expected to have found her, though alive, yet much weaker than I left her. I was happy therefore to find that, after a very bad Night, Sleep had at length stolen upon her; and that she was just awaked

greatly

greatly refreshed, after about two Hours of the calmest and sweetest Slumber that she had ever experienced; that her Delirium was quite subsided, and she felt herself stronger and more at Ease than she had done for many Days; and, as she knew her End was now very near, was endeavouring to make the best Use of the small Remainder of her Time, while her Intellects continued clear, and before her Strength should totally desert her.

Eudocia was sitting on one Side of her, and the Reverend Mr. B—— on the other. She seemed all Gratitude and Devotion: Frequently raising up her Eyes, and her Hands which were clasped

clasped in each other, in thankful Acknowledgment of the important Truths which the Reverend Clergyman delivered, and of which she had experienced the happy Influence, while he was discoursing of the great Blessing which Christians enjoy in the gracious Revelation of their Duty, and of the Certainty of those future Hopes, which, though congenial with the human Mind, are not so clear, nor accompanied with that Degree of Conviction which the Sanction of Revelation gives them. Nor did she pay less Attention to Eudocia, who, anticipating the Joys of the other World, with a Countenance divinely animated, and Eyes streaming with Rapture, expatiated on the inconceivable  
 Freedom,



Freedom, and ecstatic Pleasure which the Soul must feel in all its Operations, when having put off the Incumbrances of Body and Sense, it shall be safely arrived at that blissful Land of pure Life and perfect Liberty which is prepared for all them who shall be faithful to the End in obeying the Will of their heavenly Father.

In this Manner she passed the Rest of the Day, and the following Night. Eudocia was constantly by her Bed-side, and the worthy Clergyman was but little absent. Her Friend, Dr. D——, who had been with her early in the Morning, returned again about Eight o'Clock in the Evening. He is certainly a Man of  
uncommon

uncommon Sensibility, otherwise the Frequency of Death-bed Scenes, with which his Profession must have made him familiar, would have rendered his Heart callous, and less apt, than it is, to be affected on such Occasions.

As he was sitting by my Cousin, looking at his Watch which he held in one Hand, while he was feeling her Pulse with the other, with a Smile upon her Countenance, pointing with her Finger to the Watch, she could just be heard to say, "How long, dear Sir?—The  
 "Remnant of Life must surely soon be  
 "measured now."

We

We all, from Custom, I believe, more than from Hope, fixed our Eyes upon the Doctor, as if expecting Comfort from his Answer. He seemed greatly affected; and with Difficulty could utter, "Not long, my dear Lady:—ere another Sun you will feel your Enlargement."

"Yes, Sir," said Eudocia, "it will be a blessed Enlargement, I am well assured."

Almira, lifting up her Hands and Eyes, with Fervor trembling on her Lips, spoke for some Minutes; but with so low and indistinct a Voice, that

M

her

her Gestures, as much as the few broken Sentences which we could now and then catch hold of, informed us, that she was returning Thanks to the best of Beings, for the comfortable Hopes which she felt of an approaching happy Immortality, which enabled her to view with inexpressible Pleasure so near a Prospect of her Dissolution.

Sir Harry and the old Lady came into the Room about Nine o'Clock in the Evening; but how were they struck with the Scene that presented itself! Eudocia, Lady S——, myself, Almira's Maid, and the Nurse, together with the Reverend Mr. B——, were kneeling  
round



round the Bed, while that worthy and pious Clergyman was praying by the dying Lady. They attempted to join us; but were unable to restrain their Grief within due bounds on so trying an Occasion, and soon obliged to quit the Room.

Oh! Hypatia, what a Task have I undertaken, in pretending to give you a Description of Almira's Behaviour on her Death-bed! All that I can say can give you but a faint Idea of that warm Benevolence, pure and unfeigned Devotion, and sweet Complacency, which perpetually shone in her Countenance; and of that perfect Dignity, I had al-

M 2

most

most said Sublimity, which accompanied every Action and Gesture, and seemed to elevate her into something more than Human. Not to mention that so minute a Recollection of every Circumstance, and the confining my Attention so constantly to the great Value and Perfections of my late dear and best of Friends, does but add to my Grief, by making me feel more sensibly the vast and irreparable Loss which I have sustained. I find myself, indeed, quite exhausted by what I have already written; and must beg you to wait patiently for the Sequel of my sad Story, till I am better able to proceed with it. At present I shall betake myself to Rest, in

Hopes

IDEAL TRIFLES. 245

Hopes of composing by Sleep a Heart  
that is worn out with Sorrow and Watch-  
ing.

Adieu,

M. F——.

gim  
thr

M 3

LET-

LETTER XXIII.

Miss F—— to HYPATIA.

Thursday Morning.

**A**LAS, Hypatia! were I to wait till Time had effaced my Grief; till I could bear to recollect the dying Image of my dear departed Friend without sorrowing; you might never have the Sequel of that Day, which robbed all her Friends, but *me in particular*, of one of the greatest earthly Blessings. To *me* she was not only a Friend, but a Parent. In losing her, I have lost a judicious and faithful Instructor, as well  
as



as the brightest Example of genuine Virtue and Religion. Such a Loss cannot be too long remembered, or too much regretted. However painful therefore the Task, I will proceed to give you the best Idea my Grief will permit me, of the few last Moments of the dearest and best of Women.

Poor Eudocia had now passed almost three Days and Nights with very little Nourishment, and less Sleep, her Mind having been continually in a State of intense Activity. Her Spirits were at length quite exhausted; and about Midnight, as she was sitting upon the Bed, supporting in her Bosom the reclining Head of her dying Friend, she suddenly

complained of a Dizziness and Swimming in her Head, and instantly dropped back upon the Bed in a Swoon. She was immediately conveyed into the Dining-Room; but notwithstanding the greatest Pains were taken to recover her, it was more than five Minutes before she could be brought to herself. Sir William S—— and Sir Harry, who were both up, did not long remain ignorant of what had happened, and entered the Dining-Room just as she was recovering. Sir Harry ran up to her, and caught her in his Arms. “ Oh! “ my Eudocia,” said he, “ my dear “ Girl, do not add to our already too- “ great Distress.” She was a good Deal surprised and confused by this Incident; but

but it was easy, I thought, to perceive, notwithstanding her Agitation, that she was not less affected with Pleasure at being the Object of such tender Emotions in Sir Harry, than with Surprise and Confusion at so unexpected and unwary a Publication of them: For reclining her languishing Head upon his Neck, she wept with a Degree of Passion and Tenderneſs with which I never before had ſeen her affected. But ſoon recollecting herſelf, ſhe wiſhed the Gentleman a good Night; ſaying, “ as ſhe  
 “ was now pretty well recovered, ſhe  
 “ could not allow herſelf to be a Mo-  
 “ ment longer from her dying Friend.”

Sir Harry endeavoured to dissuade her from returning so soon, and begged, that, after taking some proper Refreshment, she would retire to rest; lest her harrassed Spirits should again fail her as they had already done, and her Health be endangered by such over Exertion of her no very great Stock of Strength.

“What!” said she, “would the dear  
 “Brother of my Almira wish to deprive  
 “me, for any trifling Consideration of  
 “Health, of the Satisfaction and even  
 “Improvement which I may reap from  
 “passing with her the few remaining  
 “Hours which she has to spend in this  
 “World? No, Sir Harry; from her



“ Life I have learned to live, and from  
 “ her Death let me learn to die.” And  
 so saying, away she sprung, without  
 waiting for an Answer ; and hasted back  
 to Almira’s Room, where Sally brought  
 some Refreshment for her, which she  
 took, and then resumed her Seat by  
 her dying Friend. She was no sooner  
 seated on the Side of the Bed, than my  
 dear Cousin, as if she knew every Thing  
 which had passed, taking hold of her  
 Hand, lifting up her lovely languishing  
 Eyes, and looking earnestly at her, seem-  
 ed to say, “ be happy Eudocia, for I  
 “ shall assuredly be so.” It was thus, at  
 least, that Eudocia, as well as every one  
 present, interpreted her Looks ; for  
 stooping down, and kissing her Lips,

“ if you, my dear,” said she, “ miss  
 “ of Happiness, who can expect to find  
 “ it !”

About Three o’Clock she was very  
 restless; and by the wild Motion of her  
 Eyes, some incoherent Mutterings, and  
 the disturbed Expressions of her Coun-  
 tenance, seemed to wander a good Deal.  
 She several Times attempted to speak :  
 At last, fixing her Eyes upon Eudocia,  
 we could hear her say, with a low  
 Voice, “ and *every Thing*, my Friend,  
 “ will *become new* : Nay, it is already;  
 “ *Heaven opens to my Eyes !*”

Eudocia, overjoyed to hear once more  
 that lovely Voice, and to find that her  
 Reason

Reason was returning, cried out in a Kind of Ecstasy, “ and you can never “ feel *the Sting of Death*; for that is “ Sin.”

Soon after her Brother came into the Room. Lady S——, seeing him enter, stepped up to him, and begged him to retire; as she was afraid that he might be so violently affected by seeing his Sister in so near an Approach to Death; and that if, as was not improbable, she should breathe her last while he should continue in the Room, he might not soon overget the Shock which he would receive from such an Accident. But she could not prevail.

“ No,

“ No, my Lady,” said he, “ I will  
 “ summon up my firmest Resolution;  
 “ and let what will happen, I will learn  
 “ to bear it.”

He then went up to the Bed-side,  
 and seeing his Sister lie (almost) motion-  
 less, he started; “ and what,” said he,  
 “ am I too late for a last Adieu.” Per-  
 fectly sensible, she turned her Head,  
 and, without uttering a Word, looked  
 at him for some Time with inexpressible  
 Tendernefs. He stooped down and  
 kissed her. She took him by the Hand,  
 and with greater Strength of Voice than  
 she had been able to exert for many  
 Hours before, “ May the Almighty,”  
 said she, “ bless my Brother, while he  
 “ shall



“ shall think proper to continue him in  
 “ this World, with every Enjoyment  
 “ of real Value that it can afford; and  
 “ when it shall please him to terminate  
 “ his Existence here, may he on his  
 “ Death-bed be blessed as I am.”—

These, Hypatia, were the last Words  
 which she spoke. She sunk down ex-  
 hausted by this sudden Blaze of expi-  
 ring Strength, and never stirred, or  
 took the least Notice of any Thing  
 afterwards. She lay, for near an Hour,  
 motionless, scarcely breathing, and  
 more like one in a calm and sweet  
 Sleep, than in a State of dying. During  
 all this Time Eudocia was upon her  
 Knees by the Bed-side, perfectly ab-  
 sorbed in fervent Prayer and Devotion,  
 with

with one of her Hands lying upon Almira's Arm ; which, when she perceived to be cold and lifeless, she gave a deep Sigh, and sunk down upon the Floor. She was soon brought a little to herself ; but continued hysterical for some Time, till at length a Flood of Tears considerably relieved her. Sir Harry stood like a Statue against one of the Bed-posts, with his Eyes fixed on the still-lovely Face of his dear departed Sister. Every one was variously, but all greatly affected. I retired with Lady S—— into the Dining-Room ; where, oh Hypatia ! I heard the Weepings and Lamentings of the Servants below, which harrowed up my Soul.

When

When her Ladyship was a little recovered we returned to the mournful Chamber, where we found Eudocia in a most affecting Attitude, weeping over the still-beautiful Body: Sir Harry walking up and down the Room in great Agony, "I shall be suffocated," said he, "I cannot breathe:" he went to the Window, and, opening the Shutters, threw up one of the Sashes. The Windows of the Chamber looked towards the East, and the Bed was situated opposite to the Windows. The Sun was up. The Shutters being thus suddenly opened, the bright Rays of the Sun unexpectedly blazing into the Room, had a most glorious Appearance: He seemed to shine with uncommon  
Splendor

Splendor on the Death-bed. Eudocia started, and turning about, "O thou  
 " bright Luminary," said she, "do you  
 " still continue to shine upon a sinful  
 " World? My Almira has now no more  
 " Need of you: She is far beyond the  
 " Reach of your poor and limited In-  
 " fluence." Then, with her uplifted  
 Hands clasped in each other, and her  
 Eyes directed towards the Sun, "but  
 " if," said she, "the wise Disposer of  
 " all Things has permitted a few more  
 " Suns to shine upon us, while your  
 " Beams cheer the Body, and nourish  
 " up the Fruits of the Earth, may the  
 " Light of his Countenance so shine  
 " upon our Souls, that, cherished and  
 " invigorated by its vivifying Warmth,  
 " they



“ they may bring forth goodly and delicious Fruit, and may be meet for that heavenly Paradise to which our dear Friend is transplanted.”

She continued speaking for a considerable Time; but as my Memory will not serve me to do justice to her nervous and pathetic Ejaculation, I shall content myself with observing, that the tenderest and sublimest Sentiments were accompanied with such suitable Gestures, and such feeling Expressions of Countenance, as would have moved the most insensible. It was no Wonder, therefore, that we felt the full Power of her Eloquence. We were, indeed, greatly, though variously, agitated and affected through the

the Whole of it: One while we were spurred on to feel the bitterest Anguish; another, we were all Resignation and Composure; and another, we were dissolved into the softest Melancholy. A tender, weeping Melancholy is, indeed, the Temper of Mind which every one of this Family is, at present, disposed to indulge; to the sweet Distress of which no one can be a Stranger who shall hear the Story of poor Almira.—Farewell, Hypatia;—I can write no more.

M. F——.

P. S. To-morrow Night the Body of Almira is to be interred in the Family-Vault at ———. The old Lady bears  
this

this Affliction better than we could expect. Sir Harry, and the other Part of the Family, are greatly afflicted. As for Eudocia, I know not whether she grieves or rejoices most. She is deeply sensible of the great Loss she has sustained, and often most feelingly laments it: But when, forgetting her own Loss, she considers that her departed Friend has but quitted a State of much Sorrow and Affliction, and, at best, of very imperfect Enjoyment; and entered into that World of perfect and ineffable Bliss, where Sorrow shall never more intrude; she rejoices at the Happiness which her Friend must experience in so advantageous a Change. It is impossible to keep her out of the Room where the

Corpse

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Corpse lies. Her Employment there is  
Reading, Writing, or Weeping, in Fits  
of sublime Passion, over the lifeless  
Body.

LETTER



LETTER XXIV.

\* EUDOCIA TO HYPATIA.

“ **B**EAUTY and Wit will die;  
“ Learning will vanish away; and  
“ all the Arts and Accomplishments of  
“ this Life will be soon forgotten :  
“ But Virtue will remain forever.”

Here, Hypatia, is a Sight will strike  
this Truth, with all its Force and Just-  
ness, deeply into your Heart. Where  
is now the beautiful, the witty, the

\* This Letter is supposed to be written in the  
Room where the Body of her Friend lay.

elegant,

elegant, the accomplished Almira, who inspired Love and Admiration in every Beholder?—Nothing here remains of her, but this poor, fallen, defaced, and mouldering Tenement; and even of this too we shall soon be deprived:—For To-morrow it will be given up to the Dust, from whence it was taken.—But the virtuous Almira still lives in the Hearts of all who knew her Goodness, and in that Haven of Happiness which is the certain and everlasting Reward of all the Virtuous.—Were all our Hopes, my Friend, confined to this Life, Death would afford a very dismal and gloomy Prospect indeed.—“But Virtue will remain forever.”—There is our Hope and Comfort.—She is not dead:—She hath

hath only ascended higher in the Scale of Existence, and hath entered into a superior Order of intelligent Beings; whither it will be our own Fault, if we do not, after a longer or shorter Separation, as it shall please the wise Disposer of all Things, follow and rejoin her. Let us then, instead of mispending our Time in bewailing her Death, improve it by imitating her Virtues. For by *Virtue*, and Virtue only, can we enter into those blissful Regions after Death, into which she is gone before us: Virtue can, and assuredly will, open to us the Gates of Heaven, and usher us into an inconceivably happy Eternity: “ If we  
 “ are wise then, Hypatia, let us study  
 “ Virtue, and condemn every Thing  
 N . . . “ that

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“ that comes in Competition with it.  
“ Nothing else deserves one anxious  
“ Thought or Wish. This alone is  
“ Honour, Glory, Wealth, and Hap-  
“ piness. Secure this, and you secure  
“ every Thing. Lose this, and all is  
“ lost.” †

\* \* \* \* \*

\* \* \* \* \*

† The Remainder of this Letter is wanting;  
the Original being much torn.





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